







THE  
HISTORY OF IRELAND,

FROM

709+

THE TREATY OF LIMERICK  
TO THE PRESENT TIME.

By JOHN MITCHEL, Esq.

*Second Edition.*

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I

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## INTRODUCTION,

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IN preparing this work, the compiler has aimed only to reduce and condense into a coherent narrative the materials which exist in abundance in a great number of publications of every date within the period.

That period of a century and a half embraces a series of deeply interesting events in the annals of our country—the deliberate Breach of the Treaty of Limerick—the long series of Penal Laws—the exile of the Irish soldiery to France—their achievements in the French and other services—the career of Dean Swift—the origin of a Colonial Nationality among the English of Ireland—the Agitations of Lucas—the Volunteering—the Declaration of Independence—the history of the Independent Irish Parliament—the Plot to bring about the Union—the United Irishmen—the Negotiations with France—the Insurrection of 1798—the French Expeditions to Ireland—the “Union” (so called)—the decay of Trade—the fraudulent Imposition of Debt upon Ireland—the Orangemen—the beginning of O’Connell’s power—the *Veto* agitation—the Catholic Association—Clare Election—Emancipation—the series of Famines—the Repeal Agitation—the Monster Meetings—the State Trials—the Great Famine—the Death of O’Connell—the Irish Confederation—the fate of Smith O’Brien and his comrades—the Legislation of the United Parliament for Ireland—Poor Laws—National Educa-

1906



tion—the Tenant-Right Agitation—the present condition of the country, &c.

The mere enumeration of these principal heads of the narrative will show how very wide a field has had to be traversed in this work; and what a large number of works—Memoirs, Correspondence—Parliamentary Debates—Speeches and local histories must have been collated, in order to produce a continuous story. There exist, indeed, some safe and useful guides, in the works of writers who have treated special parts or limited periods of the general History; and the compiler has had no scruple in making very large use of the collections of certain diligent writers who may be said to have almost exhausted their respective parts of the subject.

It may aid the reader who desires to make a more minute examination of any part of the History, if we here set down the titles of the principal works which have been used in preparing the present: Dr. John Curry's "Historical Review of the Civil Wars," and "State of the Irish Catholics"—Mr. Francis Plowden's elaborate and conscientious "Historical Review of the State of Ireland," before the Union:—the same author's "History of Ireland" from the Union till 1810—the Letters and Pamphlets of Dean Swift—Harris's "Life of William the Third"—Arthur Young's "Tour in Ireland"—the Irish "Parliamentary Debates"—Mr. Scully's excellent "State of the Penal Laws"—Thomas MacNevin's "History of the Volunteers," in the "Library of Ireland"—Hardy's "Life of Lord Charlemont"—the Four Series of Dr. Madden's collections on the "Lives and Times of the United Irishmen"—Hay's "History of the Rebellion in Wexford"—the Rev. Mr. Gordon's "History of the Irish Rebellion" [the work of Sir Richard Musgrave, as being wholly untrustworthy, is purposely excluded]—The "Papers and Correspondence" of Lord Cornwallis—and of Lord Castlereagh;—the "Memoirs of Miles Byrne, an Irish Exile in France," and a French officer of rank,



lately deceased—the Lives and Speeches of Grattan and Curran—Sir Jonah Barrington's "Rise and Fall of the Irish Nation"—Memoirs and Journals of Theobald Wolfe Tone—Richard Lalor Shiel's "Sketches of the Irish Bar"—Wyse's "History of the Catholic Association"—O'Connell's Speeches and Debates in the United Parliament.

These are the chief authorities for all the time previous to the Catholic Relief Act. As to the sketch which follows, of transactions still later, it would be obviously impossible to enumerate the multifarious authorities: but the Speeches of O'Connell and of William Smith O'Brien are still, for the Irish history of their own time, what the orations of Grattan were for his; and what the vivid writings of Swift were for the earlier part of the eighteenth century. The newspapers and Parliamentary Blue Books also come in, as essential materials (though sometimes questionable) for this later period; and for the Repeal Agitation, the State Trials, the terrible scenes of the Famine, and the consequent extirpation of millions of the Irish people, we have, without scruple, made use (along with other materials) of the facts contained in "The Last Conquest of Ireland (perhaps)"—excluding generally the inferences and opinions of the writer, and his estimate of his contemporaries. Indeed, the reader will find in the present work very few opinions or theories put forward at all; the genuine object of the writer being simply to present a clear narrative of the events as they evolved themselves one out of the others.

Neither does this History need comment; and indignant declamation would but weaken the effect of the dreadful facts we shall have to tell. If the writer has succeeded—as he has earnestly desired to do—in arranging those facts in good order, and exhibiting the naked truth concerning English domination since the Treaty of Limerick, as our fathers saw it, and felt it;—if he has been enabled to picture, in some degree like life, the long agony

of the Penal Days, when the pride of the ancient Irish race was stung by daily, hourly humiliations, and their passions goaded to madness by brutal oppression ;—and further, to picture the still more destructive devastations perpetrated upon our country in this enlightened nineteenth century; then it is hoped that every reader will draw for himself such general conclusions as the facts will warrant, without any declamatory appeals to patriotic resentment, or promptings to patriotic aspiration.

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# HISTORY OF IRELAND.

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## CHAPTER I.

FROM THE TREATY OF LIMERICK TO THE END OF 1691.

THE Articles of Limerick were signed on the 3rd October, 1691, and the city was surrendered to the army of King William, who was then, for the first time, recognized by the body of the Irish nation as King of Ireland; and when the Irish forces, who had held Limerick and Galway so gallantly, were shipped off to France, pursuant to the capitulation, there was not left in all Ireland the slightest semblance of any power capable of resisting or troubling the new settlement of the kingdom. The timely surrender had also enabled William to bring to a close this most troublesome and costly war, at a moment when it was urgently needful for him to concentrate all his force against the great power of France.

It is therefore evident, and has always been admitted, that in return for the engagements of the treaty purporting to protect Catholic rights, the king and the English colonists received most valuable consideration. "In Ireland there was peace: the domination of the colonists was absolute." These are the words of Lord Macaulay, who, of all modern historians, has uniformly exhibited the most inveterate malignity against the Irish nation.

Before proceeding to narrate in detail the manner in which the articles were observed on the part of the king and the dominant colony of English, it will be well to exhibit some other facts proving what a very valuable consideration the Catholics gave for the poor guaranty they thought they were receiving on their side. At the beginning of October the winter was closely approaching, and the army of Ginkell was almost certain to be forced to raise the siege on that account alone. The same Macaulay, in his estimate of the chances of Ginkell's success, thus sums them up:—

"Yet it was possible that an attempt to storm the city might fail, as a similar attempt had failed twelve months before. If

the siege should be turned into a blockade, it was probable that the pestilence which had been fatal to the army of Schomberg, which had compelled William to retreat, and which had all but prevailed even against the genius and energy of Marlborough, might soon avenge the carnage of Aghrim. The rains had lately been heavy. The whole plain might shortly be an immense pool of stagnant water. It might be necessary to move the troops to a healthier situation than the banks of the Shannon, and to provide for them a warmer shelter than that of tents. The enemy would be safe till the spring. In the spring a French army might land in Ireland—the natives might again rise in arms from Donegal to Kerry—and the war, which was now all but extinguished, might blaze forth fiercer than ever.”

This historian, whose work enjoys much more popularity than credit, does not mention a circumstance which made it, in fact, certain that the war would soon have blazed forth fiercer than ever, beyond all doubt. It is that, before the signing of those articles, assurances had been sent from France to the defenders of Limerick that a considerable expedition was then on its way to their aid, under command of Chateau Renault ; which re-enforcement did actually arrive in Dingle Bay two days after the treaty was signed, “consisting,” says Harris, in his *Life of King William*, “as appears from the minutes of a letter from the lords-justices to the king, of eighteen ships of war, six fire-ships, and twenty great ships of burthen, and brought on board eight or ten thousand arms, two hundred officers, and three thousand men.” Whether the Irish commanders were or were not justified in surrendering a city which they were still capable of defending, and while in daily expectation of so powerful succour, is a question which need not here be discussed. The sequel of the story will show that they had soon cause to regret not having held out to the last extremity, though they should have been buried in the ruins of their ancient city.

It was afterwards known, too, that William was himself so sensible of the necessity of finishing this struggle and bringing his troops to re-enforce his army on the Continent, that he had sent instructions to the lords-justices to issue a proclamation assuring the Irish of much more favourable conditions than they afterwards obtained by the Articles of Limerick. And the justices actually framed these instructions into a proclamation, afterwards called the secret proclamation, because, though printed, it was never published ; for their lordships, learning that the defenders of Limerick were offering to capitulate, hastened to Ginkell's camp, that they might hold the Irish to as hard terms as

could possibly be wrung from them. So that, as Lord Macaulay complacently observes, the Dutch general "had about him persons who were competent to direct him."

In return for this full and final surrender of the last fortress which held for King James, and of the whole cause of that monarch, the Irish Catholic leaders stipulated, it must be confessed, for but a poor measure of civil and religious freedom when they put their hands to the clause engaging that "The Roman Catholics of this kingdom shall enjoy such privileges in the exercise of their religion as are consistent with the laws of Ireland ; *or*, as they did enjoy in the reign of King Charles the Second." But it is probable that, placing more reliance on the good faith of King William than events afterwards justified, they believed themselves secured by the remaining words of that article—"And their majesties, as soon as their affairs will permit them to summon a parliament in this kingdom, will endeavour to procure the said Roman Catholics such further security in that particular as may preserve them from any disturbance upon the account of their said religion." All which was duly ratified by their majesties' letters-patent. Sarsfield and Wauchop then, with their French brother-officers, in marching out of Limerick, thought that they were leaving, as a barrier against oppression of the Catholics, at least the honour of a king.

The whole history of Ireland, from that day until the year 1793, consists of one long and continual breach of this treaty.

But as there has been, both among Irish and English political writers, a great deal of wild declamation and unwarranted statement on this subject, it seems needful to give a precise view of the real purport and limitations of the engagements taken towards the Irish Catholics upon this occasion. Independently, then, of the royal promise of future parliamentary relief to "protect Catholics from all disturbance," there was the general engagement for such privileges to Catholics in the exercise of their religion "as were consistent with the laws of Ireland ; *or*, as they did enjoy in the reign of Charles II." And also the Ninth Article of the treaty, that "The oath to be administered to such Roman Catholics as submit to their majesties' government shall be the oath above-mentioned (namely, the oath of allegiance), and no other." These provisions were applicable to all Catholics living in any part of Ireland. Other articles of the Treaty, from the Second to the Eighth inclusive, related only, *first*, to the people of Limerick and other garrisons then held by the Irish ; *second*, to officers and soldiers then serving King James, in the counties of Limerick, Clare, Kerry, Cork, and Mayo ; *third*, to "all such as

were under their protection in the said counties," meaning all the inhabitants of those counties. These three classes of persons were to be secured their properties and their rights, privileges, and immunities (as in the reign of Charles the Second), and to be permitted to exercise their several callings as freely as Catholics were permitted to do in that reign. We need not, at this day, occupy ourselves at great length with these latter specific stipulations ; but attend to the general proviso in favour of all Catholics. What, then, were the rights of Catholics under King Charles the Second ?—for this seems to be what is meant by the other phrase, "consistent with the laws of Ireland."

Now it is true that penal laws against Catholic priests and Catholic worship did exist in Ireland during the reign of Charles the Second : Catholics, for example, could not be members of a corporation in Ireland, nor hold certain civil offices in that reign. But there was no law to prevent Catholic peers and commons from sitting in Parliament. There was also in practice so general a *toleration* as allowed Catholic lawyers and physicians to practice their professions. At the very lowest, therefore, this practical toleration must have been what the Catholics thought they were stipulating for in the Articles of Limerick. Neither did there exist in the reign of Charles the Second that long and sanguinary series of enactments concerning education, the holding of land, the owning of horses, and the like, which were elaborated by the ingenuity of more modern chiefs of the Protestant Ascendancy. The first distinct breach of the Articles of Limerick was perpetrated by King William and his Parliament in England, just two months after those Articles were signed.

King William was in the Netherlands when he heard of the surrender of Limerick, and at once hastened to London. Three days later he summoned a Parliament. Very early in the session the English House of Commons, exercising its customary power of binding Ireland by acts passed in London, sent up to the House of Lords a bill providing that no person should sit in the Irish Parliament, nor should hold any Irish office, civil, military, or ecclesiastical, nor should practise law or medicine in Ireland, till he had taken the oaths of allegiance *and supremacy* and subscribed the declaration against transubstantiation. The law was passed, only reserving the right of such lawyers and physicians as had been within the walls of Galway and Limerick when those towns capitulated. And so it received the royal assent. This law has given rise to keen debates ; especially during the Catholic Relief Agitation ; the Catholics insisting that disabilities imposed by law on account of religion, are an invasion of those privileges



in the exercise of their religion, which purported to be secured by Treaty ; the Ascendency Party arguing that the First Article of the Treaty meant only that Catholic worship should be tolerated. The Catholics pointed out that by Article Nine, only the oath of allegiance was to be imposed on them, while this new law required those who should practise law or sit in the House of Parliament, to take a certain other oath, which they could not do without perjuring themselves. The Ascendency Party replied, that on taking the oath of allegiance alone, Catholics were tolerated in *their worship*, and that this was all they had stipulated for ; that it still belonged to the Legislature to prescribe suitable formalities to be observed by those who aspired to exercise a public trust or a responsible profession. It is apparent that on this principle of interpretation, Parliament might require the oath of supremacy from a baker or a wine-merchant, as well as from a lawyer and doctor, and then it would be lawful for a Catholic to go and hear Mass, but it would be lawful for him to do nothing else. As might be expected, the Baron Macaulay takes the Ascendency view of the question, as will appear from this specimen of his reasoning :

“ The champions of Protestant Ascendency were well pleased to see the debate diverted from a political question about which they were in the wrong, to a historical question about which they were in the right. They had no difficulty in proving that the First Article, as understood by all the contracting parties, meant only that the Roman Catholic worship should be *tolerated as in time past*. That article was drawn up by Ginkell ; and, just before he drew it up, he had declared that he would rather try the chance of arms than consent that Irish Papists should be capable of holding civil and military offices, of exercising liberal professions, and of becoming members of municipal corporations. How is it possible to believe that he would, of his own accord, have promised that the House of Lords and the House of Commons should be open to men to whom he would not open a guild of skinnners or a guild of cordwainers ? How, again, is it possible to believe that the English peers would, while professing the most punctilious respect for public faith, while lecturing the Commons on the duty of observing public faith, while taking counsel with the most learned and upright jurist of the age as to the best mode of maintaining public faith, have committed a flagrant violation of public faith, and that not a single lord should have been so honest or so factious as to protest against an act of monstrous perfidy aggravated by hypocrisy ? ”

Whereupon it may be remarked that mere toleration of

Catholic worship was *not* understood, by all the contracting parties, as being all which was meant by the treaty, inasmuch as many Catholic peers and commoners did attend in their places in the Irish Parliament the very next year after this law was passed in London ; and the slavish Irish Parliament then, for the first time, excluded them by resolutions in obedience to the law enacted in the English Houses. As for the argument which seems intended to be conveyed in the string of questions contained in the above extract, we answer that "it is possible to believe" almost anything of the men and the times we are now discussing ; and that this narrative will tell of many other things which will seem impossible to believe, and which any good man would wish it were impossible to believe.

Macaulay, indeed, before quitting this question, does admit, as it were incidentally, and in the obscurity of a note, that although the Treaty of Limerick was not broken at that particular moment, nor by that particular Statute of the 3rd William and Mary, c. 2, yet, "The Irish Roman Catholics complained, and with but too much reason, that at a later period the Treaty of Limerick *was* violated." And it is remarkable that this historian endeavours to sustain his position by the authority of the Abbé MacGeoghegan. He says, "The Abbé MacGeoghegan complains that the Treaty was violated some years after it was made, but he does not pretend that it was violated by Statute 3rd, William and Mary, c. 2." This is extremely uncandid. The Abbé MacGeoghegan did not profess to continue his History of Ireland beyond the Treaty of Limerick ; before quitting his subject, however, the venerable author does incidentally mention that this Treaty was afterwards violated by many Statutes, which it was not his province to arrange in chronological order ; and after noticing some of the hardships thus inflicted upon the Irish people, he adds:—"By *other acts*, the Irish nobility were deprived of their arms and horses ; they were debarred from purchasing land, from becoming *members of the bar*, or filling any public office ; and, contrary to the Ninth Article of the Treaty, they were made subject to infamous oaths."\*

Notwithstanding the very slender concessions which were apparently granted to the Catholic people by this memorable treaty, however, the Protestant English colony in Ireland was immediately agitated by the bitterest indignation against both the general and the lords-justices. They thought the Irish entitled to no articles or conditions but what would expose them to the severest rigours of war ; and the "Protestant Interest," and "Ascendency"

\* See page 613 of Sadlier's Edition.

thought themselves defrauded of a legitimate vengeance, to say nothing of their natural expectations of plunder; a most unfounded apprehension, as will presently appear.

After the conclusion of the Treaty, the lords-justices returned to Dublin; and on the following Sunday attended service in Christ Church Cathedral. The preacher was Doctor Dopping, Bishop of Meath; and he took for the subject of his sermon the late important events at Limerick. He argued that no terms of peace ought to be observed with so perfidious a people;\* a fact which, if it were not notorious and well-attested, might seem incredible; seeing that one of the worst charges brought against the Catholics at that period was that *they* taught that faith was not to be kept with heretics. The doctrine of the Bishop of Meath, however, was not approved by all the divines of his party, for on the next Sunday, in the same church, Doctor Moreton, Bishop of Kildare, demonstrated the obligation of keeping public faith. It seems that this important question greatly occupied men's minds at that time; for it was judged necessary to settle and quiet public opinion; and to this end, on the third Sunday, in the same church, Dean Synge preached a conciliatory sort of discourse, neither absolutely insisting on observing the treaty, nor distinctly advising that it should be broken. His text was, "Keep peace with all men, *if it be possible.*" After this we hear no more of any discussions of the grand controversy in the pulpit; but in Parliament and in Council the difference subsisted, until the English Act of Resumption of Estates quieted the disputants, who then saw they lost nothing by the Articles, as the Catholics gained nothing.

While these debates were proceeding in Dublin, the Protestant magistrates and sheriffs had no doubt upon the point, whether faith was to be kept with Catholics or not; they universally decided in the negative; and in less than two months after the capitulation was confirmed by the king, as we learn on the authority of William's own partial biographer, Harris, "the justices of peace, sheriffs, and other magistrates, presuming on their power in the country, did, in an illegal manner, dispossess several of their majesties' subjects, not only of their goods and chattels, but of their lands and tenements, to the great disturbance of the peace of the kingdom, subversion of the law, and reproach of their majesties' government." It is a much heavier reproach to their majesties' government that no person appears to have been prosecuted, nor in any way brought to justice for these outrageous

\* Harris's Life of King William.



oppressions. It appears by a letter of the lords-justices of the 19th of November, 1691 (six weeks after the surrender of Limerick), "that their lordships had received complaints from all parts of Ireland, of the ill-treatment of the Irish who had submitted, had their majesties' protection, or were included in articles; and that they were so extremely terrified with apprehensions of the continuance of that usage, that some thousands of them who had quitted the Irish army, and had gone home with a resolution not to go for France, were then come back again [come back, it is presumed, to Cork, Limerick, and other seaports], and pressed earnestly to go thither, rather than stay in Ireland, where, contrary to the public faith (add these justices), as well as law and justice, they were robbed of their substance and abused in their persons." But, still no effectual means were used by the government for repressing such wrong; so that we may well adopt the language of Dr. Curry, that these representations made by the lords-justices were only a "pretence." Indeed, Harris affirms, and every statement of this nature made by Harris is an unwilling admission, that Capel, one of these very lords-justices, did, shortly after, proceed as far as it was in his power, to infringe the Articles of Limerick.

The prospect which now opened before the Catholics of Ireland was gloomy indeed. Already they were made to feel in a thousand forms all the bitterness of subjugation, and to perceive that in this reign of King William, so vaunted for its liberality, the blessings and liberties of the British Constitution, if any such there were, existed not for them; that they had no security for even such remnants of property as had been left them, no redress by the laws of the land, and no refuge from their enemies even in the pledged faith of a solemn treaty. Yet we have only arrived at the beginning of the system of grinding oppression which was soon to be put in operation against them. This preliminary chapter is devoted to an account of the immediate breaches of the Articles of Limerick, which were perpetrated within the three months after their signature. We are next to trace the development of that great code of *Penal Laws*, which Dr. Samuel Johnson described as more grievous than all the Ten Pagan persecutions of the Christians.

Before finishing this chapter, it is proper to allude to one other instance of the determined mendacity of Baron Macaulay. Respecting the embarkation of Sarsfield and the Irish troops from Cork, that historian compiles from several sources the following narrative:—

"Sarsfield perceived that one chief cause of the desertion which



was thinning his army was the natural unwillingness of the men to leave their families in a state of destitution. Cork and its neighbourhood were filled with the kindred of those who were going abroad. Great numbers of woman, many of them leading, carrying, suckling their infants, covered all the roads which led to the place of embarkation. The Irish general, apprehensive of the effect which the entreaties and lamentations of these poor creatures could not fail to produce, put forth a proclamation, in which he assured his soldiers that they should be permitted to carry their wives and families to France. It would be injurious to the memory of so brave and loyal a gentleman to suppose that when he made this promise *he meant to break it*. It is much more probable that he had formed an erroneous estimate of the number of those who would demand a passage, and that he found himself, when it was too late to alter his arrangements, *unable to keep his word*. After the soldiers had embarked, room was found for the families of many. But still there remained on the water-side a great multitude, clamouring piteously to be taken on board. As the last boats put off there was a rush into the surf. Some women caught hold of the ropes, were dragged out of their depth, clung till their fingers were cut through, and perished in the waves. The ships began to move. A wild and terrible wail rose from the shore, and excited unwonted compassion in hearts steeled by hatred of the Irish race and of the Romish faith. Even the stern Cromwellian, now at length, after a desperate struggle of three years, left the undisputed lord of the bloodstained and devastated island, could not hear unmoved that bitter cry, in which was poured forth all the rage and all the sorrow of a conquered nation."

The sad scene here related did really take place ; and in after-times, when those Irish soldiers were in the armies of France, and saw before them the red ranks of King William's soldiery, that long, terrible shriek rung in their ears, and made their hearts like fire and their nerves like steel. We know that when their officers sought to rouse their ardour for a charge, no recital of the wrongs their country had endured could kindle so fierce a flame of vengeful passion as the mention of "the women's parting cry." But the dishonesty of Lord Macaulay's account is in ascribing that cruel parting to the noble Sarsfield, and in distinctly charging him with breaking his word to the soldiers, though he did not mean to break it when he gave it.

Now, by referring back to the "Military Articles" of the Treaty, we see that it was not Sarsfield, but General Ginkell, on the part of King William, who was to furnish shipping for the

emigrants and their families—"all other persons belonging to them;"—that it was not Sarsfield, but Ginkell, who was to "form an estimate" of the amount of shipping required; and that it was not Sarsfield, therefore, but Ginkell, who could "alter the arrangements" at the last moment. As to General Sarsfield's proclamation to the men, "that they should be permitted to carry their wives and families to France," he made that statement on the faith of the First and several succeeding Articles of the Treaty, not being yet aware of any design to violate it. But this is not all: the historian who could not let the hero go into his sorrowful exile without seeking to plunge this venomous sting into his reputation, had before him *The Life of King William*, by Harris, and also *Curry's Historical Review of the Civil Wars*, wherein he must have seen that the lords-justices and General Ginkell are charged with endeavouring to defeat the execution of that First Article. "For," says Harris, "as great numbers of the officers and soldiers had resolved to enter into the service of France, and to carry their families with them, Ginkell would not suffer their wives and children to be shipped off with the men; not doubting that by detaining the former he would have prevented many of the latter from going into that service. This, I say, was confessedly an infringement of the Articles."

To this we may add, that no Irish officer or soldier in France afterwards attributed the cruel parting at Cork to any fault of Sarsfield, but always and only to a breach of the Treaty of Limerick. And if he had deluded them in the manner represented by the English historian, they would not have followed him so enthusiastically on the fields of Steinkirk and Landen.

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## CHAPTER II.

1692—1693.

KING WILLIAM THE THIRD was not personally fanatical or illiberal; and never desired to punish or mulct his subjects, whether in Ireland, in England, or in Holland, for mere differences of religion, about which this king cared little or nothing. But he was king by the support of the Protestant party; was the recognized head of that party in Europe; was obliged to sustain that party, and avenge it upon its enemies, or it would soon have deserted his interests and his cause. For the first four years of his reign in Ireland, we have even the too favourable testimony

of some Irish writers to the leniency and beneficence of his administration, which the reader will find hard to conciliate with the actual facts. Mr. Matthew O'Connor, a worthy member of the "Catholic Board," gives this very remarkable testimony :—

"In matters of religion, King William was liberal, enlightened, and philosophic. Equally a friend to religious as to civil liberty, he granted toleration to dissenters of all descriptions, regardless of their speculative opinions. In the early part of his reign, the Irish Catholics enjoyed the full and free exercise of their religion. They were protected in their persons and properties; their industry was encouraged; and under his mild and fostering administration, the desolation of the late war began to disappear, and prosperity, peace, and confidence to smile once more on the country."

To those who are disposed to be thankful for very small favours, the beginning of William's reign in Ireland was certainly acceptable. There was a practical toleration of Catholic worship, though it was against the law; priests were not hunted, though by law they were felons; and for a short while it seemed as if "the Ascendency" would content itself with the forfeitures of rich estates, and the exclusion of Catholic gentlemen from Parliament, from the bar, and the practice of medicine, and Catholic traders from the guilds of their trade, and from the corporate bodies of the towns they dwelt in. This was actually the amount of the toleration granted to the Irish Catholic nation during those early years of this reign.

In 1692, the Lord Lieutenant, Lord Sydney, convened the first Irish Parliament of William's reign. It was the first Parliament in Ireland (except that convened by James) for twenty-six years. As there was then no Irish Act disqualifying Catholics from sitting in Parliament, certain peers and a few commoners of that faith attended, and took their seats; but the English Parliament of the year before having provided against this, they were at once met by the oath of supremacy, declaring the king of England head of the Church, and affirming the sacrifice of the Mass to be damnable. The oath was put to each member of both houses, and the few Catholics present at once retired, so that the Parliament, when it proceeded to business, was purely Protestant. Here then ended the last vestige of constitutional right for the Catholics: from this date, and for generations to come, they could no longer consider themselves a part of the existing body politic of their native land; and the division into two nations became definite. There was the dominant nation, consisting of the British colony; and the subject nation, consisting of five-sixths of the

population, who had thereafter no more influence upon public affairs than have the Red Indians in the United States.

Before quitting the subject of this total abolition of civil existence for the Catholics, we may anticipate a little to observe that, by another act of the Irish Parliament, in 1697,\* it was enacted, that "a Protestant *marrying* a Catholic was disabled from sitting or voting in either house of Parliament." But as Catholics could still vote at elections (though they could now vote for none but mortal enemies), even this poor privilege was taken away from them a few years later. In 1727, it was enacted, that "no Catholic shall be entitled or admitted to vote at the election of any member to serve in Parliament as a knight, citizen, or burgess; or at the election of any magistrate for any city, or other town corporate; any law, statute, or usage to the contrary notwithstanding."† By the operation of these Statutes alone, without taking account for the present of the more directly penal code, the great mass of the population of this country was debased to a point which it now requires an effort fully to comprehend. No man had to court their votes, nor consult their interest or their feelings. They had no longer any one to stand up for them in the halls of legislation, to oppose new oppressions (and the oppressions were always new and heavier from day to day), nor to expose and refute calumnies, and these were in plenty. They were not only shut out from the great councils of the nation, but every one of them, in every town and parish in Ireland, felt himself the inferior and vassal of his Protestant neighbours, and the victim of a minute, spiteful, and contemptuous tyranny, at the hands of those who were often morally and physically far his inferiors. Of the exclusion from Parliament, the able author of the *Statement of the Penal Laws* has truly observed:—

"The advantages flowing from a seat in the Legislature, it is well-known, are not confined to the *individual representative*. They extend to all his family, friends, and connections; or, in other words, to every Protestant in Ireland. Within his reach are all the honours, offices, emoluments: every sort of gratification to avarice or vanity: the means of spreading a great personal interest by innumerable petty services to individuals. He can do an infinite number of acts of kindness and generosity, and even of public spirit. He can procure advantages in trade, indemnity from public burdens, preferences in local competitions, pardons for offences. He can obtain a thousand favours, and avert a thousand evils. He may, whilst he betrays every valuable public

\* 9th Wm. III., chap. 3.

† 1 Geo. II., chap. 9.



interest, be, at the same time, a benefactor, a patron, a father, a guardian angel to his political adherents. On the other hand, how stands the Catholic gentlemen or trader? For his own person, no office, no power, no emolument; for his children, brothers, kindred, or friends, no promotion, ecclesiastical or civil, military or naval. Except from his private fortune, he has no means of advancing a child, of making a single friend, or of showing any one good quality. He has nothing to offer but harsh refusal, pitiful excuse, or despondent representation."

And the effect of the exclusion from corporations was a thousand times more galling still; because that disability presses upon individuals everywhere, in their own homes, and in every daily action of their lives. The same accurate author, writing more than a century after King William's death, thus describes the condition of Catholic tradesmen and artificers throughout the towns of Ireland:—it will show how thoroughly these penal laws did their work for generations:

"They are debased by the galling ascendancy of privileged neighbours. They are depressed by partial imposts; by undue preferences and accommodation bestowed upon their competitors; by a local inquisition; by an uncertain and unequal measure of justice; by fraud and favouritism daily and openly practised to their prejudice. The Catholic gentleman, whose misfortune it may be to reside in or near to any of these cities or towns in Ireland, is hourly exposed to all the slights and annoyances, that a petty sectarian oligarchy may think proper to inflict. The professional man risks continual inflictions of personal humiliation. The farmer brings the produce of his lands to market under heavier tolls. Every species of Catholic industry and mechanical skill is checked, taxed, and rendered precarious.

"On the other hand, every species of Protestant indolence is cherished and maintained; every claim is allowed; every want supplied; every extortion sanctioned: nay, the very name of 'Protestant' secures a competence, and commands patrician pre-eminence in Ireland."

But though the inhabitants of Ireland were now, counting from the year 1692, definitively divided into two castes, there arose immediately, strange to say, a strong sentiment of Irish nationality; not, indeed, amongst the depressed Catholics—they were done with national sentiment and aspiration for a time; but the Protestants of Ireland had lately grown numerous, wealthy, and strong. Their numbers had been largely increased, partly by English settlers coming to enjoy the plunder of the forfeited estates, and very much by conversions, or pretended conversions

of Catholics who had recanted their faith to save their property or their position in society, and who generally altered or disguised their family names when these had too Celtic a sound. The Irish Protestants also prided themselves on having saved the kingdom for William and "the Ascendency;" and having now totally put down the ancient nation under their feet, they aspired to take its place, to rise from a colony to a nation, and to assert the dignity of an independent kingdom.

Even in this Parliament of 1692 the spirit of independence ventured to show itself. Two money-bills, which had not originated in Ireland, were sent over from England to be passed, or rather to be accepted and registered. One of these bills was for raising additional duty on beer, ale, and other liquors; and this they passed, to an amount not exceeding £70,000; but grounding their action upon the alleged urgency of the case, and declaring that it should not be drawn into a precedent. This was on the 21st of October, 1692. Much constitutional discussion took place upon this occasion; and honourable members stimulated one another's patriotism by recalling the rights and prerogatives of the ancient kingdom of Ireland. So, a few days after, on the 28th of October, the House of Commons rejected altogether the second English bill; which was to grant to their majesties the produce of certain duties for one year. On the 3rd of November, Sydney prorogued Parliament with a very angry speech; and at the same time required the clerk to enter his formal protest against the dangerous doctrine asserted in the Commons' resolutions, and haughtily affirming the right and power of the English Parliament to bind Ireland by acts passed in London. After two prorogations, this Parliament was dissolved on the 5th of September, 1793.

Not only did King William give his royal assent to the laws of exclusion made by this Parliament, but he did not make any proposal or any effort to gain for the Irish Catholics those "further securities" as engaged by the Treaty of Limerick, which were to protect them from "all disturbance" in the exercise of their religion. Yet this was but a trifling matter compared with what the same king did in the course of the next following Parliament, that convened in 1695. It is often alleged, on his behalf, that he was provoked and distressed by the furious bigotry and violence of his Irish Protestant subjects; and that he even endeavoured to moderate them by the influence of Sydney, his lord lieutenant; in short, that he was so wholly dependent on his Parliaments, both of England and of Ireland, that he could not venture to thwart their one great policy, purpose, and passion—

to crush Papists; and that such opposition on his part would have cost him his crown. That was unfortunate for him; inasmuch as the actual conduct which these headstrong supporters of his obliged him to adopt, has cost him more than a crown, his reputation for good faith.

It was in February of this year, 1692, that the massacre of Glencoe befel in a remote valley of the highlands of Scotland. King William, we are assured, did not wish to perpetrate this iniquity, any more than to break the Treaty of Limerick; but certain wicked advisers in Scotland forced him to do the one deed, just as his furious Protestants of Ireland obliged him to commit the other. In Scotland it was the wicked Master of Stair, together with the vindictive Marquis of Breadalbane, who planned the slaughter; and Stair, the Secretary for Scotland, presented to the king, in his closet, and then and there induced his Majesty to sign a paper in these words:—"As for MacI'an of Glencoe, and that tribe, if they can be well distinguished from the other Highlanders, it will be proper, for the vindication of public justice, to extirpate that set of thieves." And this order was directed to the Commander of the Forces in Scotland. What was intended, therefore, was military execution, without judge or jury, to be inflicted upon unarmed and unsuspecting country-people, with their wives and children. The crime, or alleged crime, was having been late in coming in and giving their submission. The king did not read the order above cited, says Archbishop Burnet, but he signed it; and says his eloquent eulogist, Macaulay, "Whoever has seen any thing of public business knows that princes and ministers daily sign, and indeed must sign documents which they have not read; and of all documents, a document relating to a small tribe of mountaineers, living in a wilderness, not set down in any map, was least likely to interest a sovereign whose mind was full of schemes on which the fate of Europe might depend." Yet the order was not a long one; about three seconds, if his Majesty could have spared so long a time from meditating on the fate of Europe, would have shown him what fate he was decreeing to the MacDonalds of Glencoe. It seems he could not give so much of his leisure, so the order was sent; and accordingly, the king's troops, having first quartered themselves amongst the simple people, in the guise of friends, and partaken of their mountain hospitality; and having taken the precaution, as they believed, to guard all the outlets of the valley, arose before dawn one winter's morning, and butchered every MacDonald, man, woman, and child, whom they could find. A few details of this performance may be interesting; they are given



by Lord Macaulay, an author who was certainly not disposed to exaggerate their atrocity :—

“ But the orders which Glenlyon had received were precise, and he began to execute them at the little village, where he was himself quartered. His host, Inverriggen, and nine other MacDonalds, were dragged out of their beds, bound hand and foot and murdered. A boy twelve years old clung round the captain's legs, and begged hard for life. He would do any thing! he would go any where: he would follow Glenlyon round the world. Even Glenlyon, it is said, showed signs of relenting: but a ruffian named Drummond shot the child dead.

“ At Auchnaion the tacksman Auchinriater was up early that morning, and was sitting with eight of his family round the fire, when a volley of musketry laid him and seven of his companions dead or dying on the floor. His brother, who alone had escaped unhurt, called to Sergeant Barbour, who commanded the slayers, and asked as a favour to be allowed to die in the open air. ‘ Well,’ said the sergeant, ‘ I will do you that favour for the sake of your meat which I have eaten.’ The mountaineer, bold, athletic, and favoured by the darkness, came forth, rushed on the soldiers who were about to level their pieces at him, flung his plaid over their faces, and was gone in a moment.

“ Meanwhile Lindsay had knocked at the door of the old chief, and had asked for admission in friendly language. The door was opened. MacIan, while putting on his clothes and calling to his servants to bring some refreshments for his visitors, was shot through the head. Two of his attendants were slain with him. His wife was already up and dressed in such finery as the princesses of the rude Highland glens were accustomed to wear. The assassins pulled off her clothes and trinkets. The rings were not easily taken from her fingers; but a soldier tore them away with his teeth. She died on the following day.”

Over thirty persons were killed there that morning, but owing to the “ blunder,” as Macaulay calls it, of commencing the massacre with a volley of musketry, instead of giving them the cold steel, three-fourths of the MacDonalds of Glencoe escaped the slaughter, but only to perish in the snowy mountains for want of food and shelter. Such, and so sad may be the effects of evil counsels upon the minds of benevolent monarchs, who are too deeply occupied in revolving projects on which the fate of Europe might depend.

Another event befell in the summer of this year, 1692, which deserves record. On a July morning, about the time when the Protestant Parliament in Dublin was devising cunning oaths



against Transubstantiation and Invocation of Saints, to drive out its few Catholic members, Patrick Sarsfield, and some of his comrades, just fresh from Limerick, had the deep gratification to meet King William on the glorious field of Steinkirk. Sarsfield and Berwick were then officers high in command under Marshal Luxembourg, when King William, at the head of a great allied force, attacked the French encampment. The attacking force was under the banners of England, of the United Provinces, of Spain, and of the Empire; and it had all the advantage of effecting a surprise. The battle was long and bloody, and was finished by a splendid charge of French cavalry, among the foremost of whose leaders was the same glorious Sarsfield, whose sword had once before driven back the same William from before the walls of Limerick. The English and their allies were entirely defeated in that battle, with a loss of about ten thousand men. Once more, and before very long, Sarsfield and King William were destined to meet again.

King James was at this time residing at the palace of St. Germain-en-laye, near Paris, upon a pension allowed him by Louis XIV., and waiting on the result of the war between France and the Allies. As William had now become very unpopular in England, it was believed by the advisers of the exiled monarch that a suitable "Declaration" issued from St. Germain, and promising, as the Stuarts were always ready to promise, such reforms and improvements in administration as should conciliate public opinion in England, might once more turn the minds of his British subjects towards their legitimate dynasty, and open a way for his return to his throne. His great counsellor on this occasion was Charles, Earl of Middleton, a Scotchman. On the 17th of April, 1693, this famous declaration was signed and published. It promised, on the part of James, a free pardon to all his subjects who should not oppose him after his landing; that as soon as he was restored he would call a Parliament; that he would confirm all such laws passed during the usurpation as the Houses should present to him for confirmation; that he would protect and defend the Established Church in all her possessions and privileges; that he would not again violate the Test Act; that he would leave it to the Legislature to define the extent of his dispensing power; and that he would maintain the Act of Settlement in Ireland. This Declaration, then, was an appeal to his English subjects exclusively; and to propitiate them, he promised to leave the Irish people wholly at their mercy—to undo all the measures in favour of religious liberty and common justice which had been enacted by his Irish Parliament of 1689, and to leave

the holders of the confiscated estates, his own deadly enemies in Ireland, in undisturbed possession of all their spoils. It is asserted, indeed, in the Life of King James, that he struggled against committing himself to such unqualified support of the Protestant interest, but he was finally induced to sign the document as it stood. It was sent to England, printed, and published, but produced no effect whatever of the kind intended. It did produce, however, a great and just indignation among the Irish soldiers and gentlemen who had lost all their possessions, and encountered so many perils to vindicate the right of this cowardly and faithless king. Serious discontent was manifested among the Irish regiments then serving in the Netherlands and on the frontiers of Germany and Italy; and we find that the treacherous Middleton, his Scottish and Protestant adviser, who had led the king into this act of ingratitude, as useless as it was base, made great efforts to soothe the feelings of these fine troops. A letter is extant from Lord Middleton to Justin MacCarthy, then on active service in Germany, endeavouring to explain away the obnoxious points of the Declaration, and soliciting MacCarthy's influence to pacify other officers. In this letter Secretary Middleton has the assurance to say, "The king promises in the foresaid Declaration to restore the Settlement, but at the same time declares that he will recompense all those who may suffer by it, in giving them equivalents."\* There was no such promise in the Declaration, and his correspondent must have known it; but, in truth, the Irish troops in the army of King Louis, the fierce exiles of Limerick, were at that time too busy in the camp and the field, and too keenly desirous to meet the English in battle, to pay much attention to any thing coming from King James. They had had enough of *Righ Seamus* at the Boyne Water.

A portion of them soon had their wish; for neither Luxembourg nor King William allowed the grass to grow under their horses' hoofs. On the 19th of July, in this year, 1693, they were in presence again on the bank of the little river Landen, and close by the village of Neerwinden. The English call that memorable battle by the first name, and the French by the second. It was near Liege in the Netherlands, that famous battle-ground which had seen, and was again to see, so many bloody days. This time it was the French who attacked the Allies in an intrenched position. After heavy artillery firing for some time, the French made a desperate attack on the village of Neerwinden; and the Duke of Berwick, at the head of some Irish troops, led the onset,

\* The letter is in Macpherson's Collection.

supported and followed by the left wing of the French army, commanded by Montchevreuil. The slaughter in the village was tremendous, and here Berwick was taken prisoner. This first attack failed, and after a furious struggle the French and Irish were forced back. A fresh division, under the Duke de Bourbon, renewed the attack, and was again repulsed ; but as this was the important point, Luxembourg resolved to make a final struggle for it, and the chosen forces of King Louis, led on by his renowned household troops, were launched in a resistless mass against the village. A third time it was entered, and a third time there was a scene of fearful carnage in its streets. Among the French officers in this final struggle was Patrick Sarsfield.\* King William fought his army to the last ; but Neerwinden being gone, the key of the position was lost, and at length the whole English and allied army gave way all along the line. The pursuit was furious and sanguinary, as the Allies kept tolerable order, and fought every step of the way. In the army of William was the Duke of Ormond, and in the wild confusion he was unhorsed ; but the French soldier who brought him down espied on his finger a precious diamond, and saved his life as being certainly a prisoner of rank. He was soon after exchanged for Berwick. At length the flying army of William arrived at the little river Gette ; and here the retreat was in danger of becoming a total rout. Arms and standards were flung away, and multitudes of fugitives were choking up the fords and bridges of the river, or perishing in its waters, so fiercely did the victors press upon their rear. It was here that Patrick Sarsfield, Earl of Lucan, who had that day, as well as at Steinkirk, earned the admiration of the whole French army, received his death-shot at the head of his men. It was in a happy moment. Before he fell, he could see the standards of England swept along by the tide of the headlong flight, or trailing in the muddy waters of the Gette—he could see the scarlet ranks that he had once hurled back from the ramparts of Limerick, now rent and riven, fast falling in their wild flight, while there was sent pealing after them the vengeful shout, "*Remember Limerick !*"

The victory of the French was complete ; and after two such defeats, so closely following each other, the affairs of King William went badly for a time. There was, therefore, a certain mildness and mercy observable in the administration of Ireland towards the Catholics ; for as Lawless has justly observed, "The rights of Irishmen and the prosperity of England cannot exist together—

\* It does not seem certain that Berwick and Sarsfield had any Irish regiments under their command at Landen. O'Connor (Military Memoir) says that Sarsfield fell in leading a charge of French troops.

a melancholy truth which the events of the present day only contribute to confirm, and which is still left to the enlightened English Government of future days to refute. The lights of history cannot be extinguished, nor her powerful voice silenced. The conclusions we have drawn are irresistible, and the idle violence which attempts to punish their publication only impresses those truths more deeply on the mind. The glories of William and of Anne—the victories of Marlborough, and the universal conquests of Chatham, have been the most disastrous epochs of Ireland. Never was the heart of our country so low as when England was the envy and terror of her enemies. The sounds of English triumphs were to her the sounds of sorrow—the little tyrants who ruled her were inflamed with courage, and urged on with increased rancour—the unhappy Catholics of Ireland, who always constituted the nation, were doomed to be again insulted and tortured with impunity.”

Accordingly, it will soon be seen that the apparent gentleness used at this time towards the ancient Irish nation, was destined to be of short continuance.

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### CHAPTER III.

1693—1698.

SYDNEY, the Lord Lieutenant, became exceedingly unpopular with the people of the English colony in Ireland, in consequence of his continued assertion of the supreme powers of the British Parliament, and his opposition to the assertion of this new Anglo-Irish nationality. But his unpopularity was still greater on account of his known repugnance to still further and more searching penal laws against the Catholics. He was soon, therefore, recalled, and the island was ruled for a time by three lords-justices, Lord Capel, Sir Cyril Wyche, and Mr. Duncombe. Between these three, serious differences of policy soon manifested themselves; the two latter being in favour of a continuance of the toleration, and of showing some slight regard to the rights of the Catholic people under the Treaty of Limerick; while Capel, as Harris confesses, was desirous of doing all in his power to infringe that treaty. The intrigues of the intolerent party finally prevailed so far as to procure the appointment of Capel as Lord Lieutenant; and in 1695, he summoned a Parliament, the second of his reign.

In the mean time, King William and his allies had been pro-



secuting the war against France with varying success, but on the whole, the advantage had rested with the French, at least, in the campaigns by land. In 1695, however, the tide began to turn in the Netherlands; and on the 26th of August, in that year, the town and fortress of Namur, one of the strongest places in Europe, defended by Marshal Boufflers, was surrendered to the allies after an arduous siege. For the first time, since first there were marshals of France, a French marshal delivered up a fortress to a victorious enemy. There was high rejoicing in England over this great event; it was, therefore, an event of evil omen for Ireland.

During the three years preceding the meeting of this Parliament, there had been continual complaints made by the Protestant "Ascendency," of the favours shown to "Papists," and the consequent discouragement and depression of the Protestant interest. The great theme of discussion in Ireland at that day was whether, and how far, the Articles of Limerick ought to be considered binding; and the Parliament, in 1692, had addressed the king, complaining of the restoration of certain confiscated estates to Catholics in the five counties specified in the Articles; which restoration was expressly stipulated for in the Treaty;\* and further requesting his Majesty "to have the Articles of the Treaty of Limerick laid before us [the Parliament], in order that we may learn by what means, and under what pretext they have been granted," &c. Considerably over a million of acres had been adjudged confiscated in consequence of the last "rebellion," and of this land, about one quarter had been restored to its right owners in pursuance of the treaty. In short, the "Irish nation," as the handful of colonists called themselves, was suffering under grievous distress and oppression; and a Mr. Stone, member of the Irish House of Commons, being examined at the bar of the English House, gave in his evidence so sad an account of the sufferings of the Protestants, as produced a serious effect upon public opinion in England. "There never was," he declared, "a House of Commons of that kingdom of greater property or better principles than those which met under Lord Sydney's administration." He boasted of their loyalty and zeal for his Majesty's service, and alleged that their opposition to the money bills had been occasioned by Lord Sydney's arrogance in insisting upon the supreme sovereignty of the English crown and Parliament; and last, and worst of all, he complained, "that the Papists were in actual possession of that liberty which, if extended to

\* See the Address in full, in MacGeoghegan: Sadlier's Edition.

Protestants, would have prevented the necessity of rendering the Irish Commons obnoxious by the rejection of so many bills." In short, the pathetic narration of these pretended grievances and oppressions had brought about, first, the recall of Lord Sydney, and afterwards the appointment of Lord Capel as Lord Lieutenant. The comparative success of William's arms in the Netherlands contributed still more effectually to give a complete triumph to the Ascendency party; and accordingly the Protestant colonists were highly gratified when Lord Capel, in opening the Parliament of 1695, announced that the king was intent on a firm settlement of Ireland "upon a Protestant interest." It might have been supposed that Ireland was already pretty well settled in the interest of Protestants; but the ingenuity of this Parliament found means of still further extending and improving the laws which already made Catholics outlaws in their native land.

There was no more factious opposition to the Government; the Parliament was obsequious, and readily passed all bills that were required at its hands. All it asked was to have the Papists delivered up, body and goods, into the hands of the Ascendency. It will give an idea of the grievances and oppressions which the Protestants now plaintively represented to Parliament in petitions which poured in from all quarters, if we mention that one of these petitions was from the mayor, sheriffs, and Protestant aldermen of the city of Limerick, complaining that "they were greatly damaged in their trade by the great numbers of Papists residing there, and praying to be relieved therein." And, in fact, those honest Protestants were relieved by express enactment. Another petition, gravely presented to Parliament, was "A petition of one Edward Sprag, and others, in behalf of themselves and other Protestant porters, in and about the city of Dublin, complaining that one Darby Ryan, a Papist, employed porters of his own persuasion."\* This petition was referred, like others, to the "Committee on Grievances." The grievances of persecuted Protestants, however, were soon to have an end.

Catholics had been already excluded from the Legislature, from the corporations, and from the liberal professions; but we have seen that they could still damage the trade of Protestant artificers in Limerick, and even compete with Protestant coal-porters in Dublin. The Parliament of Lord Capel was now about to take such order with them that it was hoped they would never trouble the Protestant interest any more. The first requisite was to effectually disarm them. Accordingly, one of the first enactments

\* Commons Journals.

is entitled "An Act for the better securing the Government by disarming the Papists."\* By this act, all Catholics within the kingdom of Ireland were required to discover and deliver up by a certain day, to the justices or civil officers, all their arms and ammunition. After that day search might be made in their houses for concealed arms and ammunition; and any two justices, or a mayor or sheriff, might grant the search-warrant, and compel any Catholic suspected of having concealed arms, &c., to appear before them and answer the charge or suspicion upon his oath.† The punishments were to be fine and imprisonment, or, at the discretion of the court, the pillory and whipping. It is impossible to describe the minute and curious tyranny to which this Statute gave rise in every parish of the island. Especially in districts where there was an armed yeomanry, exclusively Protestant, it fared ill with any Catholic who fell, for any reason, under the displeasure of his formidable neighbours. Any pretext was sufficient for pointing him out to suspicion. Any neighbouring magistrate might visit him at any hour of the night, and search his bed for arms. No Papist was safe from suspicion who had any money to pay in fines; and woe to the Papist who had a handsome daughter!

It would be difficult to imagine any method of degrading human nature more effectual than the prohibition of arms; but the Parliament resolved to employ still another way. This was to prohibit education. Catholics were already debarred from being tutors or teachers; and many Catholic young men were sent for education to the schools and universities of the Continent. It was therefore enacted, "that if any subjects of Ireland should, after that session, go, or send any child or person, to be educated in any popish university, college, or school, or in any private family; or if such child should, by any Popish person, be instructed in the Popish religion; or if any subjects of Ireland should send money or things towards the maintenance of such child, or other person, already sent, or to be sent, every such offender, being thereof convicted, should be forever disabled to sue or prosecute any action, bill, plaint, or information in law or equity; to be guardian, administrator, or executor to any person, or to be capable of any legacy, or deed of gift; and, besides, should forfeit all their estates, both real and personal, during their lives."‡ It was further enacted, that "No Papist," after 20th January, 1695,

\* 7 Wm. III., c. 5.

† This enactment, under various new forms and names, is the law at this day.

‡ 4 Wm. and Mary, c. 4.

shall be capable to have, or keep in his possession, or in the possession of any other, to his use, or at his disposition, *any horse, gelding, or mare* of the value of £5 or more ;” with the usual clauses to induce Protestants to inform, and cause search to be made for the contraband horses ; the property of the horses to be vested in the discoverer.

The two acts before mentioned at once bred in Ireland a great swarm of informers and detectives, who have been a grievous plague upon the country ever since. But the penal code was still far from complete. It was thought needful to strike at the Catholics more directly through their religion itself, in which it was observed that they took much comfort. Therefore, it was enacted by the same Parliament, “That all Popish archbishops, bishops, vicars-general, deans, Jesuits, monks, friars, and all other regular Popish clergy, and all Papists exercising any ecclesiastical jurisdiction, shall depart this kingdom before the 1st day of May, 1698.” If any of them remained after that day, or returned, the delinquents were to be transported, and if they returned again, “to be guilty of high treason, and to suffer accordingly.” To pretend a toleration of the Catholic religion, but to banish bishops, and thus prevent orders, can scarcely be considered a very liberal proceeding ; but there were still more minute provisions made, after banishing the clergy, for the continual torture of the laity. For example, this same Parliament, in 1695, enacted a Statute which imposed a fine of two shillings (and, in default of payment, *whipping*) upon “every common labourer, being hired, or other servant retained, who shall refuse to work at the usual and accustomed wages, upon any day except the days appointed by *this Statute* to be kept holy ; namely, all Sundays in the year, and certain other days named therein.”

Another act was passed by this Parliament, “To prevent Protestants intermarrying with Papists,” in order to obviate the possible danger of the two nations becoming gradually amalgamated by affinities and family interests ; and as the Catholics, in some places, were associating together to place their interests in the hands of legal advisers, an act was passed “to prevent Papists being solicitors.” It must not be omitted to mention, that the Parliament which violated, by so many ingenious laws, the conditions made at the capitulation of Limerick, did also gravely and solemnly pass an act “for the confirmation of *Articles* made at the surrender of the city of Limerick—or so much thereof,” said the preamble, “as may consist with the safety and welfare of your Majesty’s subjects in these kingdoms.” The greater part, or almost the whole of the stipulations on behalf of the Catholics,



contained in those Articles, had been deliberately and avowedly violated by the very Legislature which enacted this hypocritical act. It passed almost unanimously in the Commons ; but unexpectedly met with vigorous resistance in the House of Lords ; where, on its final passage, a formal protest against it was entered by a number of the ancient nobility, and even by some Anglican bishops. The protest was signed by the Lords Duncannon, Londonderry, and Tyrone ; the Barons of Limerick, Howth, Ossory, Killaloe, Kerry, Strabane, and Kingston ; and also by the Bishops of Derry, Elphin, Clonfert, Kildare, and Killala. It gave these reasons for the protest :—

“ 1. Because the title did not agree with the body of the bill ; the title being an act for the confirmation of the Irish Articles, whereas no one of said Articles was therein fully confirmed. 2. Because the articles were to be confirmed to them to whom they were granted ; but the confirmation of them by that bill was such, that it put them in a worse condition than they were in before. 3. Because the bill omitted the material words, ‘and all such as are under their protection in the said counties,’ which were by his Majesty’s titles patent, declared to be part of the Second Article ; and several persons had been adjudged within said Articles who would, if the bill passed into a law, be entirely barred and excluded, so that the words omitted being so very material, and confirmed by his Majesty after a solemn debate in council, some express reason ought to be assigned in the bill, in order to satisfy the world in that omission. 4. Because several words were inserted in the bill which were not in the Articles, and others omitted, which altered both the sense and meaning thereof. Lastly, because they apprehended that many Protestants might and would suffer by the bill in their just rights and pretensions, by reason of their having purchased, and lent money, upon the faith of said Article.”

Of the proceedings of this Parliament, it is only necessary to add one further detail :—

“ A petition of Robert Cusack, gentleman, Captain Francis Segrave and Captain Maurice Eustace, in behalf of themselves and others, comprised under the Articles of Limerick, setting forth, that in the said bill [act to confirm, &c.] there were several clauses that would frustrate the petitioners of the benefit of the same, and if passed into a law would turn to the ruin of some, and the prejudice of all persons entitled to the benefit of the said Articles, and praying to be heard by counsel to said matters, having been presented and read, it was unanimously resolved that said petition should be *rejected*.”

King William was all this while busily engaged in carrying on the war against Louis the Fourteenth, and his mind was profoundly occupied about the destinies of Europe. He seems to have definitively given up Ireland to be dealt with by the Ascendancy at its pleasure. Yet he had received the benefit of the capitulation of Limerick:—he had engaged his royal faith to its observance;—he had further engaged that he would endeavour to procure said Roman Catholics such further security as might preserve them from any disturbance upon the account of their said religion. And he not only did not endeavour to procure any such further security, but he gave his royal assent, without the least objection, to every one of these Acts of Parliament, carefully depriving them of such securities as they had, and imposing new and grievous oppressions “upon the account of their said religion.” It is expressly on account of this shameful breach of faith on the part of the King that Orange squires and gentlemen, from that day to this, have been enthusiastically toasting “the glorious, pious, and immortal memory of the great and good King William.”

The war was still raging all over Europe; and multitudes of young Irishmen were quitting a land where they were henceforth strangers and outlaws on their own soil, to find under the banners of France an opportunity for such distinction as exiles may hope to win. Brilliant reports of the achievements of the old regiments of Limerick on many a field, came to Ireland by stray travellers from the Continent, and inspired the high-spirited youth of the country with an ambition to enroll themselves in the ranks of the Irish brigade. They had heard, for example, of the great victories of Steinkirk and of Landen; and how at Marsiglia, on the Italian slope of the Alps, the French marshal, Catinat, obtained a splendid victory over the army of the Duke of Savoy—a victory, says Voltaire, “so much the more glorious as the Prince Eugene was one of the adverse generals;” and how the conduct of the Irish troops, who served under Catinat on that occasion, gained the applause of Europe and the thanks of King Louis. It is no wonder, therefore, seeing the depressing and humiliating condition to which they were reduced at home, that there was a large and continual emigration of the best blood of Ireland, at this time, and for a great part of the following century. These exiles were not confined to the people of the Celtic Irish clans; for all the English settlers in Ireland, down to the time of Henry the Eighth, had of course been Catholic, and these families generally adhered to the old religion. Thus these old English found themselves included in all the severities of the penal laws, along with the primeval Scotie people, and they had now their full proportion in

the ranks of the military adventurers who sought service on the Continent. Accordingly, among the distinguished names of the Irish brigade, by the side of the Milesian Sarsfields, O'Briens, and O'Donnells, we find the Norman-descended Dillons, Roches, and Fitzgeralds. Of the amount of that great emigration it is difficult to procure any very exact idea ; but on this subject there is no better authority than the learned Abbé MacGeoghegan, who was chaplain in the brigade, and who devoted himself to the task of recording the history of his country. He affirms that researches in the office of the French War Department show that from the arrival of the Irish troops in France, in 1691, to the year 1745 (the year of Fontenoy), more than four hundred and fifty thousand Irishmen *died* in the service of France. The statement may seem almost incredible ; especially as Spain and Austria had also their share of our military exiles ; but, certain it is, the expatriation of the very best and choicest of the Irish people was now on a very large scale ; and the remaining population, deprived of their natural chiefs, became still more helpless in the hands of their enemies. Baron Macaulay, whose language is never too courteous in speaking of the Irish, takes evident delight in dwelling upon the abject condition of the great body of the nation at this time. He calls them "Pariahs ;" compares their position, in the disputes between the English and the Irish Parliament, with that of "the Red Indians in the dispute between Old England and New England about the Stamp Act ;" mentions with complacency, that Dean Swift "no more considered himself as an Irishman than an Englishman born at Calcutta considers himself as a Hindoo ;" and says, very truly, though coarsely, that none of the "patriots" of the eighteenth century "ever thought of appealing to the native population—they would as soon have thought of appealing to the *swine*." The truth is, that most of the choicest intellect and energy of the Irish race were now to be looked for at the courts of Versailles, Madrid, and Vienna, or under the standards of France on every battle-field of Europe. The Catholics of Ireland may be said, at this date, to disappear from political history, and so remained till the era of the volunteering.

Obscure and despised as they were, however, they were not too humble to escape the curious eye of the lawyers and legislators of the "Ascendency." In fact, we have not yet advanced far beyond the threshold of the Penal Laws.

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## CHAPTER IV.

1698—1702.

WHILE the ancient Irish nation lay in this miserable condition of utter nullity, the Protestant colony continued its efforts to vindicate its independence of the Imperial Parliament, but without much success. Not only was its Parliament compelled to send over to London the "heads" of its bills, to be ratified there, but the British Parliament still persisted in exercising an original jurisdiction in Ireland, and to bind that kingdom by laws made in England, without any concurrence asked or obtained from the colonial legislature. It was always the firm resolve, both of the king and of the people of England, to deny and trample upon these assumed pretensions of their colony in Ireland to be an independent kingdom.

The reader will suppose that the English Government should not have been very jealous of any power with which the Protestant Ascendency might be armed, when they so faithfully turned those arms against the civil and religious liberties of their Catholic countrymen. The Irish Parliament, however, presumed rather too much on its past services to England. Though they were so obedient as to forge chains for the Catholics, they should not flatter themselves with the liberty of making their own laws or regulating their own slaves. They were, for the future, to consider themselves as the humbled agents of an English Government, prompt at every call which national jealousy would give to inflict or to suspend the torture.

In short, the Irish Protestant Ascendency was soon to be taught that it was the mere agent of English empire, and must aspire to no other freedom than the freedom to oppress and trample upon the ancient Irish nation. "Your ancestors," said Mr. Curran to the Irish Parliament a hundred years after—"Your ancestors thought themselves the oppressors of their fellow-subjects—but they were only their gaolers; and the justice of Providence would have been frustrated if their own slavery had not been the punishment of their vice and of their folly." This appeared very plainly when Mr. William Molyneux, one of the members for Dublin University, published, in 1698, his work entitled "The case of Ireland being bound by Acts of Parliament in England stated," a production which owes its fame rather to the indignant sensation it made in England, than to any peculiar merits of its own. It professed to discuss the principles of government and of human society, and was, in fact, more abstract and metaphy-



sical than legal. It is said that Mr. Molyneux, who was an intimate friend of John Locke, had found his principles in the writings of that philosopher, and had even submitted his manuscript to Mr. Locke's approval. The essential part of the book, however, and the only practical part, was the distinct assertion of the independent power of the Irish Parliament, as the Legislature of a sovereign state ; and consequent denial of the right claimed and exercised by the English Parliament to bind Ireland by its own enactments. The book at once attracted much attention, and was speedily replied to by two writers, named Carey and Atwood. A committee of the English Parliament was then appointed to examine the obnoxious pamphlet, and on the report of that committee, it was unanimously resolved "that the said book was of dangerous consequence to the crown, and to the people of England," &c. The House, in a body, presented an address to the king, setting forth what they called the bold and pernicious assertions contained in the aforesaid publication, which they declared to have been "more fully and authentically affirmed by the votes and proceedings of the House of Commons in Ireland, during their late sessions, and more particularly by a bill transmitted under the great seal of Ireland, entitled 'An Act for the better security of his Majesty's person and Government ;' whereby an Act of Parliament made in England was *pretended* to be re-enacted, and divers alterations therein made ; and they assured his Majesty of their ready concurrence and assistance to preserve and maintain the dependence and subordination of Ireland to the imperial crown of this realm ; and they humbly besought his Majesty that he would discourage all things which might in any degree lessen or impair that dependence." The king promptly replied "that he would take care that what was complained of might be prevented and redressed as the Commons desired." Such was the extreme political depression of Ireland, that this haughty procedure occasioned no visible resentment in her Parliament, although the leaven of the doctrines of Molyneux was still working in men's minds ; was afterwards improved by Swift and Lucas, and at length became irresistible, and ripened into an independent Irish Parliament in 1782. Meantime the proscribed Catholics took no interest in the controversy at all, and seemed insensible to its progress. As the excellent Charles O'Connor, of Belanagar, afterwards in the midst of the commotions excited by Lucas, wrote to a friend :—"I am by no means interested, nor is any of our unfortunate population in this affair of Lucas. A true patriot would not have betrayed such malice towards such unfortunate slaves as we." And he truly adds, "These boasters,

the Whigs, wish to have liberty all to themselves." In short, the two parties then existing in Ireland, and termed the court and country parties, were divided mainly upon this question : Is the conquered nation to be governed and *exploited* for the sole benefit of the colonial interest? or, Are all interests in Ireland, both colonial and native, both Protestant and Catholic, to be subservient and tributary to England? Candour requires it to be stated that of these two parties, the court and the country, the former was rather more favourable to the down-trodden Catholics; a fact of which several examples will soon have to be related. At that moment the court party held the sway, and the English Parliament ruled all.

The English were not disposed to let their predominance remain without practical fruits, as appeared in the proceedings touching the woollen-trade of Ireland. During the few first years of William's reign, there being then abundance of sheep in Ireland, and also much cheap labour, considerable progress was made in the manufacture of woollen cloths; these fabrics were exported in some quantity to foreign countries, and in many cases the Irish manufacturer was enabled to undersell the English. But England was then using great exertions to obtain the entire control of this gainful trade; and the competition of Ireland gave great umbrage. It is true that the woollen-trade in Ireland, and all the profits of its export and sale, were in the hands of the English colonists, and that the colonial Parliament in Dublin would fain have extended and protected it if they had been permitted. But here, again, the English power stepped in, and controlled every thing according to its own interest. The two Houses of Lords and Commons addressed King William, urging that some immediate remedy must be found against the obnoxious trade in Ireland. The Lords, after detailing the intolerable oppression which was inflicted upon deserving industrious people in England, expressed themselves thus :—"Wherefore, we most humbly beseech your most sacred Majesty, that your Majesty would be pleased in the most public and effectual way that may be, to declare to all your subjects of Ireland, that the growth and increase of the woollen manufacture there hath long been, and will be ever, looked upon with great jealousy by all your subjects of this kingdom, and *if not timely remedied*, may occasion very strict laws *totally to prohibit and suppress the same*." Probably no more shameless avowal of British greediness was ever made, even by the Parliament of England. But the king replied at once that "he would do all that in him lay to discourage the woollen manufacture of Ireland;" in other words, to ruin his

subjects of that island. The Irish Parliament was now also assembled in Dublin. The Earl of Galway and two others were lords-justices ; and they, pursuant to their instructions, recommended to Parliament to adopt means for putting a stop to the woollen manufacture and to encourage the linen. The Commons, in their address, meekly replied, that " they shall heartily endeavour to encourage the linen trade ; and as to the woollen, they tamely express their hope to find such a *temperament* that the same may not be injurious to England." The temperament they found was in the acts which were passed in the following year, 1699, which minutely regulated everything relating to wool. In the first place, all export of Irish woollen cloths was prohibited, except to England and Wales. The exception was delusive, because heavy duties, amounting to a prohibition, prevented Irish cloth from being imported into England or Wales. Irish wool, thereafter, had to be sent to England in a raw state, to be woven in Yorkshire ; and even this export was cramped by appointing one single English port, Barnstaple, as the only point where it could legally enter. All attempts at foreign commerce in Ireland were at this time impeded also by the " Navigation Laws," which had long prohibited all direct trade between Ireland and the colonies ; no colonial produce, under those laws, could be carried to Ireland until after it should have first entered an English port, and been unloaded there. The object of these laws, of course, was to secure to English merchants and shipowners a monopoly of all such trade, and they had the desired effect, so that a few years afterwards, the Dean of St. Patrick's could truly write :—" The conveniency of ports and harbours, which nature had bestowed so liberally upon this kingdom, is of no more use to us than a beautiful prospect to a man shut up in a dungeon."

It is noticeable that these navigation acts were not new ; they had existed before the last Revolution, and had been repealed by the excellent Parliament of 1689, under King James, consisting indifferently of Catholics and Protestants, and really representing an Irish nation—that same Parliament which had also enacted perfect liberty for all religions, and had swept away a most foul mass of penal laws from the Statute-book ; but on the failure of the cause of the Stuarts, all the enactments of that Parliament were ignored, and the penal laws and restrictions on trade reappeared in full force.

With such a deliberate system in full operation, not only to put down the political pretensions, but to destroy the trade of Ireland, and all enforced directly by English Statutes, it will be seen that the country party, which so proudly claimed national



independence, had but very slender chances at that time. Another event still further illustrated this fact. The English Parliament which was continually importuned by the king for grants of money to carry on his darling war against Louis XIV., found that the immense amount of confiscated lands, forfeited by the "rebellion" (as the national war was called), had been squandered upon King William's favourites, or leased at insufficient rents, also a small portion of it restored to its owners who had satisfied the Government that they were innocent. That Parliament therefore resolved, before making any more grants of money, to inquire how the forfeitures had been made available for the public service. A commission was appointed by a vote of Parliament for this purpose, and at the same time to provide for a grant of a million and a half sterling, for military and naval expenses. The form of this commission was itself an intimation that nothing less was contemplated than resumption of all the lands granted by special favour of the king. This was very hard upon his Majesty, and he regarded the proceeding with sour and silent displeasure; for, in fact, he had granted out of these forfeitures immense estates to William Bentinck, whom he created Lord Woodstock, to Ginkell, Lord Athlone, and others of his Dutch friends;—especially, he had bestowed over 95,600 acres on Mrs. Elizabeth Villiers, Countess of Orkney, a lady, who in the words of Lord Macaulay, "had inspired William with a passion which had caused much scandal and unhappiness in the little court of the Hague"—where, in fact, his lawful wife resided. If the consideration of the grant was of the kind here intimated, it must be allowed that William paid the lady royally, out of others' estates. The commissioners further report great corruption and bribery in the matter of procuring pardons, and astonishing waste and destruction, especially of the fine woods, which had covered wide regions of the island. The drift of their report is, that the whole of the dealings with those confiscated lands were one foul and monstrous job.

Here, it is to be remarked that this inquiry and report were by no means in the interest of the plundered Catholics, the right owners of all those estates; on the contrary, one of the points dwelt on most bitterly by the commissioners was the restoration of a small portion of them to Catholic proprietors, under what the commissioners considered delusive pretences; and the resumption which they contemplated was to have the effect of again taking away those wrecks and remnants of the property of Catholics which had been redeemed out of the general ruin. The English House of Commons, in a violent ferment, immediately



resolved, "that a bill be brought in to apply all the forfeited estates and interests in Ireland, and all grants thereof, and of the rents and revenues belonging to the crown within that kingdom, since the 13th February, 1689, to the use of the public." Then a "Court of Delegates" was appointed to determine claims; and it was resolved by the House "that they would not receive any petitions whatever against the provisions of this bill." The report of the commission had been signed only by four commissioners out of seven, namely, by Annesley, Trenchard, Hamilton, and Langford, the other three having dissented. The House, therefore, came to the resolution, "that Francis Annesley, John Trenchard, James Hamilton, and Henry Langford, Esqs., had acquitted themselves with understanding, courage, and integrity; which was an implied censure on the Earl of Drogheda, Sir Francis Brewster, and Sir Richard Levinge, the three dissentient commissioners; and the House went so far as to vote Sir Richard Levinge to be the author of certain groundless and scandalous aspersions respecting the commissioners who had signed the report, and to commit him, thereupon, prisoner to the Tower. There were long and acrimonious debates upon this question; a sharp address to the king, in pursuance of the sense of the majority, and a submissive answer from his Majesty, declaring that he was not led by inclination, but thought himself obliged, in justice, to reward those who had served well, and particularly in the reduction of Ireland, out of the estates forfeited to him by the rebellion there." And the House resolved, in reply, "that whoever advised his Majesty's answer to the Address of the House has used his utmost endeavour to create a misunderstanding and jealousy between the king and his people." The "Bill of Resumption" of the forfeited estates finally passed, after vehement opposition, and received the reluctant royal assent, on the 11th of April, 1700, on which day his Majesty prorogued the Houses, without any speech, thinking there was no room for the usual expressions of satisfaction and gratitude; and not choosing to give any public proof of discontent or resentment. In all these Parliamentary disputes, there was not the least question of the rights or claims of any Irish Catholic; nor does it appear that there would have been the slightest opposition to any scheme which concerned merely the resumption of lands restored to *them*. The biographer of William remarks, "that no transaction during the reign of this monarch so pressed upon his spirits, or so humbled his pride, as the resumption of the grants of the forfeited estates in Ireland by the English Parliament." This may be easily believed; but it is to be remarked, that we find no such opinion

from King William's enthusiastic biographer when he was called on to set his seal to the legislative violations of the Treaty of Limerick. He could ill bear to deprive his Dutch courtiers of their Irish estates; but it was of small moment to him to beggar and oppress millions of Irishmen in violation of his own plighted faith.

In his private despatches to Lord Galway, shortly after the rising of Parliament, the king says:—"You may judge what vexation all their extraordinary proceedings gave me; and I assure you, your being deprived of what I gave you with so much pleasure is not the least of my griefs. I never had more occasion than at present for persons of your capacity and fidelity. I hope I shall find opportunities to give you marks of my esteem and friendship."

The short remainder of William's reign was occupied chiefly with negotiations on the Continent; and with oscillations of his policy between the Whig and Tory parties; according to the use which he thought he could make of those parties respectively in promoting his views against France—the only use which he could ever see in English parties, to say nothing of Irish ones. The peace of Ryswick was signed in 1697; but in 1701, King James died at St. Germain; and his son (afterwards called the Pretender) was recognized as King James III. of England by the king and court of France, who paid their visits of condolence and congratulation at the Court of St. Germain. King William immediately recalled his ambassador from Paris; and again there was the evident and imminent necessity of a new war with France; which was all that King William lived for. He was not, however, to live much longer.

The death of the young Duke of Gloucester, son of the Princess Anne, about the same time with that of King James II., gave occasion to the Act of Parliament—the last act of this reign—by which the crown of England was settled on the House of Hanover, after the demise of Anne. This act was repeated, as it were, mechanically, by the servile Parliament of the Irish colony. But though a highly important settlement of the sovereign authority, it does not seem to have aroused the smallest interest in the mass of the Irish people. It seemed now to be their opinion, and indeed the opinion was just, that it mattered nothing to them for the future whether Stuarts or Hanoverians should rule in England. They had had bitter experience of the one dynasty; and did not know that they were yet to have a more terrible experience of the other.

King William had fallen into very bad health; but still occupied

himself in vast projects concerning his great concern, "the destinies of Europe." His speech, on the assembling of his last Parliament, the last day of the year 1701, will show how his active mind was occupied to the last. "I persuade myself," said the king, "that you are met together, full of that just sense of the common danger of Europe, and that resentment of the late proceedings of the French king, which has been so fully and universally expressed in the loyal and seasonable addresses of my people. The eyes of all Europe are upon this Parliament; all matters are at a stand till your resolutions are known. Let me conjure you to disappoint the only hopes of our enemies by your unanimity. I have shown, and will always show, how desirous I am to be the common father of all my people. Do you, in like manner, lay aside parties and divisions. Let there be no other distinction heard of among us for the future, but of those who are for the Protestant religion and the present establishment, and of those who mean a Popish prince and a French government. If you do in good earnest desire to see England hold the balance of Europe, and to be indeed at the head of the Protestant interest, it will appear by your right improving the present opportunity." The king meant by voting large supplies for war with France. But King William was at the end of his wars; he was destined never to make any more of his famous retreats before French marshals; and he died in little more than two months after this speech, 8th of March, 1702, his death having been hastened by a fall from his horse in riding from Kensington to Hampton Court. His death was little regretted, save in Holland, by anybody; even by the squires of the "Ascendency" in Ireland, who long toasted in their cups his "glorious, pious, and immortal memory." He had no personal quality that could endear him to any human being, unless the common quality of personal bravery may be so accounted. His religion was hatred to Papists; his fair fame was stained by faithlessness and cruelty, and he will be forever named in history the Treaty-breaker of Limerick, and the assassin of Glencoe.

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## CHAPTER V.

1702—1704.

THE Princess Anne, generally called at that time Anne of Denmark, because she was the wife of the Prince of Denmark, succeeded William on the throne of the three kingdoms. She

was the daughter of King James II., in vindication of whose rights the Irish nation had fought so desperately, and suffered so cruelly. She was acknowledged as queen, avowedly as the last of her race, by virtue of the act establishing the succession in the House of Hanover; and her brother was an attainted and proscribed outlaw. But if the Irish people had imagined that any Stuart, or indeed any English sovereign, could either be moved by gratitude for their loyal service, or stung by resentment against the dominant Whig party, which ruined and degraded the Stuart family, to the point of interposing or interceding on behalf of the oppressed Catholics, they would have been grossly deceived. In truth, they had no such hope or expectation. They were as indifferent to the Stuarts now as the Stuarts were to them; and except some Irish officers on the Continent, who still put their trust in a counter-revolution, none of the Irish took the smallest interest in the new settlement of the throne, nor cared whether a descendant of the Stuarts or of the Electress of Hanover should reign over England.

King William had died just at the moment when his able policy had succeeded in uniting the power of the Germanic Empire with that of England and Holland, for another war against Louis. Three days after her accession, the queen repaired in person, with the usual pomp and solemnity, to the House of Peers, and made a speech from the throne, expressing her fixed resolution to prosecute the measures concerted by the late king, whom she styled "the great support, not only of these kingdoms, but of all Europe." And she declared "that too much could not be done for the encouragement of our allies, and to reduce the exorbitant power of France." In the conclusion of her speech she took occasion to protest "that her heart was truly English," which was considered a studied affront to the memory of the late king, whose heart was Dutch; but the allusion probably only added to her popularity. Her most influential counsellors, at first, were the Earls of Marlborough and Godolphin, who were eager for the most vigorous prosecution of the war. Lord Godolphin was appointed Lord High Treasurer, and Marlborough Captain-General of the forces of England at home and abroad. War was declared against France simultaneously on the same day at London, Vienna, and the Hague.

Lord Rochester was then Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. He was of the Tory party, much averse to the war, and loud in his denunciations of it. But his protests at the council-board having been disregarded, he retired in high indignation to his country-seat. Shortly afterwards a message from the queen was dis-



patched to him, commanding him to repair to his government of Ireland, whereupon he insolently declared "that he would not go if the queen gave him the whole country." The earl then waited on her Majesty and resigned his office, which was immediately conferred upon the Duke of Ormond; an evil omen for Ireland when one of the name of Butler was appointed to rule over her. But the duke did not come to Dublin for that year, as he was employed in military service abroad; this island was therefore, as usual, placed under the government of three lords-justices, Lord Mount Alexander, General Erle, and Mr. Knightley.

The military operations began with the siege of Kaiserswart, a strong place on the Rhine. The Prince of Nassau-Saarbruck conducted the siege, and Ginkell, now "Earl of Athlone," commanded the covering army. The place capitulated on the 15th of June. Shortly after, the Earl of Marlborough came over from England to take command of the allied army; and entered upon that career of brilliant achievements which entitled him to rank as the first soldier of his time. Unfortunately the English arms were successful in this campaign; and the unfailing result followed—a new code of laws to still further beggar and torture the Irish. It is an irksome and painful task to pursue the details of that terrible penal code; but the penal code is the history of Ireland. The Duke of Ormond, after an unsuccessful attempt upon Cadiz, and a prosperous one upon the Spanish fleet in the harbour of Vigo, in Spain, came over to his government in Ireland, where the Irish Commons, in a body, presented to him the first of the famous bills "to prevent the further growth of Popery." The House, says Burnett, "pressed the duke with more than usual vehemence, to intercede so effectually that it might be returned back under the great seal of England." His grace was pleased to give his promise "that he would recommend it in the most effectual manner, and do everything in his power to prevent the growth of Popery."

One might indeed suppose that "Popery" had been already sufficiently discouraged; seeing that the bishops and regular clergy had been banished; that Catholics were excluded by law from all honourable or lucrative employments; carefully disarmed and plundered of almost every acre of their ancient inheritances. But enough had not yet been done to make the "Protestant interest" feel secure. The provisions of this bill "to prevent the further growth of Popery," which were so warmly recommended by the Duke of Ormond, are shortly these: the third clause enacts that if the son of a Papist shall at any time become a Protestant, his father may not sell or mortgage his estate, or dispose of it, or

any portion of it, by will. The fourth clause provides that a Papist shall not be guardian to his own child ; and further, that if his child, no matter how young, conforms to the Protestant religion, he reduces his father at once to a tenant for life ; the child is to be taken from its father, and placed under the guardianship of the nearest Protestant relation. The sixth clause renders Papists incapable of purchasing any landed estates, or rents, or profits arising out of land, or holding any lease of lives, or any other lease for any term exceeding thirty-one years ; and even in such leases the reserved rent must be at least "one-third of the improved annual value;" any Protestant who *discovers* being entitled to the interest in the lease. The seventh clause prohibits Papists from succeeding to the property of their Protestant relations. The tenth clause provides that the estate of a Papist who has no Protestant heir shall be *gavelled* ; that is, parcelled in equal shares between all his children. Other clauses impose on Catholics the oath of abjuration and the sacramental test, to qualify for any office or for voting at any election. After several further clauses relating to qualifications for office, which were not of very great importance, as no Catholic then aspired to any office, come the 15th, 16th, and 17th clauses, which carefully deprive the citizens of Limerick and Galway of the poor privilege promised them in the Treaty, of living in their own towns and carrying on their trade there, which, it will be remembered, was grievously complained of by the Protestant residents as a wrong and oppression upon *them*.

When this bill was sent to England it somewhat embarrassed the Court. Queen Anne was then in firm alliance with the great Catholic power of Austria, and the English Government, with its usual hypocritical affectation of liberality, was ever pressing the emperor for certain indulgences to his Protestant subjects. Yet the bill was not objected to on the part of the crown ; it was, in fact, thought then, as it is thought now—and with justice—that what is done in Ireland is done in a corner ; and that England might continue to play her part as champion of religious liberty in the world, while she herself went to the uttermost extremities of intolerant atrocity in Ireland. The bill was sent back approved, in order that it might be passed by the Irish Parliament ; and the only modification it received in England was actually an additional clause imposing still further penalties and disabilities. This clause was levelled against the Protestant Dissenters, who were already a numerous and wealthy body, especially in Ulster ; and was to the effect that none in Ireland should be capable of any employment, or of being in the

magistracy of any city, who did not qualify by receiving the sacrament according to the rites of the Church of England; according to the Test Act, which had till then been applicable only to that kingdom, and had never yet been imposed upon Ireland. It has been alleged by the friends of the Government of Queen Anne, that the Administration invented this plan, hoping that it would defeat the bill altogether. Bishop Burnett, in his "History of his own Times," says, "It was hoped, by those who got this clause added to the bill, that those in Ireland who promoted it most, would now be the less fond of it, when it had such a weight hung to it." If it be indeed true that the Government intended to defeat the bill by this underhand method, the plan did not succeed. Nothing was too savage for the "Ascendency," provided only that it was to aggrieve and oppress the Catholics; and for the same great object, the Dissenters themselves, though they remonstrated at first by petition, soon meekly acquiesced in their own exclusion and disabilities. The law was to ruin the Catholics; and that was enough for them.

On the return of the bill to Ireland, and before its passage in Dublin, certain Catholics prayed to be heard by counsel in opposition to it. They were Nicholas Viscount Kingsland, Colonel J. Brown, Colonel Burke, Colonel Robert Nugent, Colonel Patrick Allen, Captain French, and other Catholics of Limerick and Galway. Their petition was granted; and in pursuance of that order, three advocates for the Catholics appeared at the bar of the House of Commons. They were Sir Theobald Butler, Counsellor Malone, and Sir Stephen Rice; the two first in their gowns, the third without a gown, as he appeared not for the petitioners in general, but for himself in his private capacity, as one of the aggrieved persons. It is to be observed that these Catholic lawyers were themselves "protected persons," within the meaning of the Articles of Limerick; and that they were pleading on that day not only for their clients, but for themselves—for their own liberty to plead in court and to wear their gowns. It was a very remarkable scene; and as it forms an era in the history of Irish penal laws, we shall insert here the main part of the excellent argumentative appeal of Sir Theobald Butler, as it is abstracted in several histories of the time.\* The speaker opens, of course, by laying great stress upon the Articles of Limerick; he proceeds thus:—

"That since the said Articles were thus under the most solemn

\* It will be found at full length in "Plowden's Appendix" and in "Curry's Historical Review."



ties, and for such valuable considerations granted the petitioners, by nothing less than the general of the army, the lords-justices of the kingdom, the king, queen, and parliament, the public faith of the nation was therein concerned, obliged, bound, and engaged, as fully and firmly as was possible for one people to pledge faith to another; that therefore this Parliament could not pass such a bill as that intituled 'An Act to prevent the further growth of Popery,' then before the House, into a law, without infringing those Articles, and a manifest breach of the public faith; of which he hoped that House would be no less regardful and tender than their predecessors who made the act for confirming those Articles had been.

"That if he proved that the passing that act was such a manifest breach of those Articles, and consequently of the public faith, he hoped that honourable House would be very tender how they passed the said bill before them into a law; to the apparent prejudice of the petitioners, and the hazard of bringing upon themselves and posterity such evils, reproach, and infamy as the doing the like had brought upon other nations and people.

"Now, that the passing such a bill as that then before the House to prevent *the further growth of Popery* will be a breach of those Articles, and consequently of the public faith, I prove (said he) by the following argument:—

"The argument then is (said he) whatever shall be enacted to the prejudice or destroying of any obligation, covenant, or contract, in the most solemn manner, and for the most valuable consideration entered into, is a manifest violation and destruction of every such obligation, covenant, and contract: but the passing that bill into a law will evidently and absolutely destroy the Articles of Limerick and Galway, to all intents and purposes, and therefore the passing that bill into a law will be such a breach of those Articles, and consequently of the public faith, plighted for performing those Articles; which remained to be proved.

"The major is proved (said he), for that whatever destroys or violates any contract, or obligation, upon the most valuable considerations, most solemnly made and entered into, destroys and violates the end of every such contract or obligation: but the end and design of those Articles was, that all those therein comprised, and every of their heirs, should hold, possess, and enjoy all and every of their estates of freehold and inheritance, and all the rights, titles, and interests, privileges, and immunities, which they and every of them held, enjoyed, or were rightfully intituled to, in the reign of King Charles the Second, or at any time since, by the laws and statutes that were in force in the



said reign in this realm : but that the design of this bill was to take away every such right, title, interest, &c., from every father being a Papist, and to make the Popish father, who, by the articles and laws aforesaid, had an undoubted right either to sell or otherwise at pleasure to dispose of his estate, at any time of his life, as he thought fit, only tenant for life : and consequently disabled from selling, or otherwise disposing thereof, after his son or other heir should become Protestant, though otherwise never so disobedient, profligate, or extravagant : *ergo*, this Act tends to the destroying the end for which those Articles were made, and consequently the breaking of the public faith, plighted for their performance.

“ The minor is proved by the 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 15th, 16th, and 17th clauses of the said bill, all which (said he) I shall consider and speak to, in the order as they are placed in the bill.

“ By the first of these clauses (which is the third of the bill), I that am the Popish father, without committing any crime against the State, or the laws of the land (by which only I ought to be governed), or any other fault ; but merely for being of the religion of my forefathers, and that which, till of late years, was the ancient religion of these kingdoms, contrary to the express words of the Second Article of Limerick, and the public faith, plighted as aforesaid for their performance, am deprived of my inheritance, freehold, &c., and of all other advantages which by those Articles and the laws of the land I am entitled to enjoy, equally with every other of my fellow-subjects, whether Protestant or Popish. And though such my estate be even the purchase of my own hard labour and industry, yet I shall not (though my occasions be never so pressing) have liberty (after my eldest son or other heir becomes a Protestant) to sell, mortgage, or otherwise dispose of, or charge it for payment of my debts, or have leave out of my own estate to order portions for my other children ; or leave a legacy, though never so small, to my poor father or mother, or other poor relations ; but during my own life my estate shall be given to my son or other heir being a Protestant, though never so undutiful, profligate, extravagant, or otherwise undeserving ; and I that am the purchasing father, shall become tenant for life only to my own purchase, inheritance and freehold, which I purchased with my own money ; and such my son or other heir, by this act, shall be at liberty to sell or otherwise at pleasure to dispose of my estate, the sweat of my brows, before my face ; and I that am the purchaser, shall not have liberty to raise one farthing upon the estate of my own purchase, either to

pay my debts, or portion my daughters (if any I have), or make provisions for my other male children, though never so deserving and dutiful: but my estate, and the issues and profits of it, shall, before my face, be at the disposal of another, who cannot possibly know how to distinguish between the dutiful and undutiful, deserving and undeserving. Is not this, gentlemen (said he), a hard case? I beseech you, gentlemen, to consider, whether you would not think it so, if the scale was changed, and the case your own, as it is like to be ours, if this bill pass into a law.

“It is natural for the father to love the child; but we all know (says he) that children are but too apt and subject, without any such liberty as that bill gives, to slight and neglect their duty to their parents; and surely such an act as this will not be an instrument of restraint, but rather encourage them more to it.

“It is but too common with the son who has a prospect of an estate, when once he arrives at the age of one-and-twenty, to think the old father too long in the way between him and it; and how much more will he be subject to it, when by this act he shall have liberty, before he comes to that age, to compel and force my estate from me, without asking my leave, or being liable to account with me for it, or out of his share thereof, to a moiety of the debts, portions, or other incumbrances, with which the estate might have been charged, before the passing this act.

“Is not this against the laws of God and man; against the rules of reason and justice, by which all men ought to be governed? Is not this the only way in the world to make children become undutiful, and to bring the gray head of the parent to the grave with grief and tears?

“It would be hard from any man; but from a son, a child, the fruit of my body, whom I have nursed in my bosom and tendered more dearly than my own life, to become my plunderer, to rob me of my estate, to cut my throat, and to take away my bread, is much more grievous than from any other; and enough to make the most flinty of hearts to bleed to think on't. And yet this will be the case if this bill pass into a law; which I hope this honourable assembly will not think of when they shall more seriously consider, and have weighed these matters.

“For God's sake, gentlemen, will you consider whether this is according to the golden rule, to do as you would be done unto? And if not, surely you will not, nay you cannot, without being liable to be charged with the most manifest injustice imaginable, take from us our birthrights, and invest them in others before our faces.

“By the 4th clause of the bill, the Popish father is under the

penalty of £500, debarred from being guardian to, or having the tuition or custody of his own child or children: but if the child pretends to be a Protestant, though never so young or incapable of judging of the principles of religion, it shall be taken from its own father, and put into the hands or care of a Protestant relation, if any there be qualified as this act directs, for tuition, though never so great an enemy to the Popish parent; and for want of relations so qualified, into the hands and tuition of such Protestant stranger as the Court of Chancery shall think fit to appoint; who, perhaps, may likewise be my enemy, and out of prejudice to me who am the Popish father, shall infuse into my child not only such principles of religion as are wholly inconsistent with my liking, but also against the duty which, by the laws of God and nature, is due from every child to its parents: and it shall not be in my power to remedy, or question him for it; and yet I shall be obliged to pay for such education, how pernicious soever. Nay, if a legacy or estate fall to any of my children, being minors, I that am the Popish father shall not have the liberty to take care of it, but it shall be put into the hands of a stranger; and though I see it confounded before my face, it shall not be in my power to help it. Is not this a hard case, gentlemen? I am sure you cannot but allow it to be a very hard case.

“The 5th clause provides that no Protestant or Protestants, having any estate, real or personal, within this kingdom, shall at any time after the 24th of March, 1703, intermarry with any Papist, either in or out of this kingdom, under the penalties in an act made in the 9th of King William, intituled, ‘An Act to prevent Protestants intermarrying with Papists;’ which penalties, see in the 5th clause of the act itself.

“Surely, gentlemen, this is such a law as was never heard of before, and against the law of right and the law of nations; and therefore a law which is not in the power of mankind to make without breaking through the laws which our wise ancestors prudently provided for the security of posterity, and which you cannot infringe without hazarding the undermining the whole legislature, and encroaching upon the privileges of your neighbouring nations, which it is not reasonable to believe they will allow.

“It has indeed been known, that there hath been laws made in England that have been binding in Ireland: but surely it never was known that any law made in Ireland could affect England or any other country. But by this act, a person committing matrimony (an ordinance of the Almighty) in England or any other part beyond the seas (where it is lawful both by the laws of God and man so to do), if ever they come to live in Ireland, and have



an inheritance or title to any interest to the value of £500, they shall be punished for a fact consonant with the laws of the land where it was committed. But, gentlemen, by your favour, this is what, with submission, is not in your power to do : for no law that either now is, or that hereafter shall be in force in this kingdom, shall be able to take cognizance of any fact committed in another nation ; nor can any one nation make laws for any other nation, but what is subordinate to it, as Ireland is to England ; but no other nation is subordinate to Ireland ; and therefore any laws made in Ireland, cannot punish me for any fact committed in any other nation, but more especially England, to whom Ireland is subordinate : and the reason is, every free nation, such as all our neighbouring nations are, by the great law of nature, and the universal privileges of all nations, have an undoubted right to make, and be ruled and governed by the laws of their own making : for that to submit to any other, would be to give away their own birthright and native freedom, and become subordinate to their neighbours, as we of this kingdom, since the making of Poyning's Act, have been and are to England. A right which England would never so much as endure to hear of, much less submit to.

“ We see how careful our forefathers have been to provide that no man should be punished in one country (even of the same nation) for crimes committed in another country ; and surely it would be highly unreasonable, and contrary to the laws of all nations in the whole world, to punish me in this kingdom for a fact committed in England, or any other nation, which was not against, but consistent with the laws of the nation where it was committed. I am sure there is not any law in any other nation of the world that would do it.

“ The 6th clause of this bill is likewise a manifest breach of the Second of Limerick Articles, for by that Article all persons comprised under those Articles, were to enjoy and have the full benefit of all the rights, titles, privileges, and immunities whatsoever, which they enjoyed, or by the laws of the land then in force, were entitled to enjoy, in the reign of King Charles II. And by the laws then in force, all the Papists of Ireland had the same liberty that any of their fellow-subjects had to purchase any manors, lands, tenements, hereditaments, leases of lives, or for years, rents, or any other thing of profit whatsoever : but by this clause of this bill, every Papist or person professing the Popish religion, after the 24th of March, 1703, is made incapable of purchasing any manors, lands, tenements, hereditaments, or any rents, or profits out of the same ; or holding any lease of lives, or any other



lease whatsoever, for any term exceeding thirty-one years ; wherein a rent, not less than two-thirds of the improved yearly value, shall be reserved, and made payable, during the whole term ; and therefore this clause of this bill, if made into a law, will be a manifest breach of those Articles.

“The 7th clause is yet of much more general consequence, and not only a like breach of those Articles, but also a manifest robbing of all the Roman Catholics of the kingdom of their birthright : for by those Articles all those therein comprised were (said he) pardoned all misdemeanors whatsoever, of which they had in any manner of way been guilty ; and restored to all the rights, liberties, privileges, and immunities whatever, which, by the laws of the land, and customs, constitutions and native birthright, they, any, and every of them, were, equally with every other of their fellow-subjects intituled unto. And by the laws of nature and nations, as well as by the laws of the land, every native of any country has an undoubted right and just title to all the privileges and advantages which such their native country affords : and surely no man but will allow, that by such a native right every one born in any country hath an undoubted right to the inheritance of his father, or any other to whom he or they may be heir at law ; but if this bill pass into a law, every native of this kingdom that is and shall remain a Papist is, *ipso facto*, during life, or his or their continuing a Papist, deprived of such inheritance, devise, gift, remainder, or trust of any lands, tenements, or hereditaments, of which any Protestant now is, or hereafter shall be seized in fee-simple-absolute, or fee-tail, which by the death of such Protestant, or his wife, ought to descend immediately to his son or sons, or other issue in tail, being such Papists, and eighteen years of age ; or, if under that age, within six months after coming to that age, shall not conform to the Church of Ireland, as by law established ; and every such devise, gift, remainder, or trust which, according to the laws of the land, and such native right, ought to descend to such Papist, shall, during the life of such Papist (unless he forsake his religion), descend to the nearest relation that is a Protestant, and his heirs being and continuing Protestants, as though the said Popish heir and all other Popish relations were dead ; without being accountable for the same : which is nothing less than robbing such Popish heir of such his birthright ; for no other reason, but his being and continuing of that religion, which by the First of Limerick Articles, the Roman Catholics of this kingdom were to enjoy, as they did in the reign of King Charles II., and then there was no law in force that deprived any Roman Catholic of this king-

dom of any such their native birthright, or any other thing which, by the laws of the land then in force, any other fellow-subjects were intituled unto.

“The 8th clause of this bill is to erect in this kingdom a law of *gavel-kind*, a law in itself so monstrous and strange, that I dare say this is the first time it was ever heard of in the world ; a law so pernicious and destructive to the well-being of families and societies, that in an age or two there will hardly be any remembrance of any of the ancient Roman Catholic families known in the kingdom ; a law which, therefore, I may again venture to say, was never before known or heard of in the universe.

“There is, indeed, in Kent, a custom called the custom of *gavel-kind* ; but I never heard of any law for it till now ; and that custom is far different from what by this bill is intended to be made a law ; for there, and by that custom, the father or other person, dying possessed of any estate of his own acquisition, or not entailed (let him be of what persuasion he will), may by will bequeath it at pleasure : or if he dies without will, the estate shall not be divided, if there be any male heir to inherit it ; but for want of male heir, then it shall descend in *gavel-kind* among the daughters and not otherwise. But by this act, for want of a Protestant heir, enrolled as such within three months after the death of such Papist, to be divided, share and share alike, among all his sons ; for want of sons, among his daughters ; for want of such, among the collateral kindred of his father ; and for want of such, among those of his mother ; and this is to take place of any grant, settlement, &c., other than sale, for valuable consideration of money, really, *bona fide*, paid. And shall I not call this a strange law ? Surely it is a strange law, which, contrary to the laws of all nations, thus confounds all settlements, how ancient soever, or otherwise warrantable by all the laws heretofore in force in this or any other kingdom.

“The 9th clause of this act is another manifest breach of the Articles of Limerick ; for by the 9th of those Articles, no oath is to be administered to, nor imposed upon such Roman Catholics as should submit to the Government, but the oath of allegiance appointed by an Act of Parliament made in England in the first year of the reign of their late majesties King William and Queen Mary (which is the same with the first of those appointed by the 10th clause of this act) : but by this clause, none shall have the benefit of this act, that shall not conform to the Church of Ireland, subscribe the declaration, and take and subscribe the oath of abjuration, appointed by the 9th clause of this act ; and therefore this act is a manifest breach of those Articles, &c., and a force

upon all the Roman Catholics therein comprised, either to abjure their religion or part with their birthrights; which, by those Articles, they were, and are as fully and as rightfully intituled unto as any other subjects whatever.

"The 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th, and 14th clauses of this bill (said he) relate to offices and employments which the Papists of Ireland cannot hope for enjoyment of, otherwise than by grace and favour extraordinary: and therefore, do not so much affect them, as the Protestant Dissenters who (if this bill pass into a law) are equally with the Papists deprived of bearing any office, civil or military, under the Government, to which, by right of birth and the laws of the land, they are as indisputably intituled, as any other their Protestant brethren; and if what the Irish did in the late disorders of this kingdom made them rebels (which the presence of a king they had before been obliged to own and swear obedience to gave them a reasonable colour of concluding it did not), yet surely the Dissenters did not do anything to make them so; or to deserve worse at the hands of the Government than any other Protestants; but, on the contrary, it is more than probable that if they (I mean the Dissenters) had not put a stop to the career of the Irish army at Enniskillen and Londonderry, the settlement of the Government, both in England and Scotland, might not have proved so easy as it thereby did; for if that army had got to Scotland (as there was nothing at that time to have hindered them, but the bravery of those people, who were mostly Dissenters, and chargeable with no other crimes since; unless their close adhering to, and early appearing for the then Government, and the many faithful services they did their country, were crimes), I say (said he) if they had got to Scotland, when they had boats, barks, and all things else ready for their transportation, and a great many friends there in arms waiting only their coming to join them, it is easy to think what the consequence would have been to both these kingdoms: and these Dissenters then were thought fit for command, both civil and military, and were no less instrumental in contributing to the reducing the kingdom than any other Protestants: and to pass a bill now to deprive them of their birthrights (for those their good services), would surely be a most unkind return, and the worst reward ever granted to a people so deserving. Whatever the Papists may be supposed to have deserved, the Dissenters certainly stand as clean in the face of the present Government as any other people whatsoever: and if this is all the return they are like to get, it will be but a slender encouragement, if ever occasion should require, for others to pursue their example.

“By the 15th, 16th, and 17th clauses of this bill, all Papists, after the 24th of March, 1703, are prohibited from purchasing any houses or tenements, or coming to dwell in Limerick or Galway, or the suburbs of either, and even such as were under the Articles, and by virtue thereof have ever since lived there, from staying there; without giving such security as neither those Articles, nor any law heretofore in force, do require; except seamen, fishermen, and day labourers, who pay not above forty shillings a-year rent; and from voting for the election of members of Parliament, unless they take the oath of abjuration; which, to oblige them to, is contrary to the 9th of Limerick Articles; which, as aforesaid, says the oath of allegiance, and no other, shall be imposed upon them; and, unless they abjure their religion, takes away their advowsons and right of presentation, contrary to the privilege of right, the laws of nations, and the great charter of Magna Charta which provides that no man shall be disseized of his birthright, without committing some crime against the known laws of the land in which he is born or inhabits. And if there was no law in force, in the reign of King Charles the Second, against these things (as there certainly was not), and if the Roman Catholics of this kingdom have not since forfeited their right to the laws that then were in force (as for certain they have not); then with humble submission, all the aforesaid clauses and matters contained in this bill, intituled, *An Act to prevent the further growth of Popery*, are directly against the plain words and true intent and meaning of the said Articles, and a violation of the public faith and the laws made for their performance; and what I therefore hope (said he) this honourable House will consider accordingly.”

It is but just to mention the arguments by which this earnest reasoning was met in the Irish House of Commons. It was objected, then, that the counsel for the Catholics had not demonstrated how and when (since the making of the Articles of Limerick) the Papists of Ireland had addressed the queen or Government, when all other subjects were so doing; or had otherwise declared their fidelity and obedience to the queen. Further it was urged, by way of reply, “That any right which the Papists pretended to be taken from them by the bill was in their own power to remedy, *by conforming*, as in prudence they ought to do; and that they ought not to blame any but themselves.” It was still further argued that the passing of this bill would not be a breach of the Treaty of Limerick, because the persons therein comprised were only to be put into the same state they were in the reign of Charles the Second; and because in that reign there was



no law in force which hindered the passing of *any other law* thought needful for the future safety of the Government : lastly, that the House was of opinion that the passing of this bill was needful at present for the security of the kingdom ; and that there was not anything in the Articles of Limerick to prohibit them from so doing. It is not needful to comment on the excessive insolence of the subterfuge.

The same counsel were heard before the Lords : and here it was admitted on the part of the petitioners, that the legislative power cannot be confined from altering and making such laws as shall be thought necessary, for securing the quiet and safety of the Government ; that in time of war or danger, or when there shall be just reason to suspect any ill designs to disturb the public peace, no articles or previous obligations shall tie up the hands of the legislators from providing for its safety, or bind the Government from disarming and securing any who may be reasonably suspected of favouring or corresponding with its enemies, or to be otherwise guilty of ill practices :—" Or indeed to enact any other law," said Sir Stephen Rice, " that may be absolutely needful for the safety and advantage of the public ; such a law cannot be a breach either of these, or any other like articles. But then such laws ought to be in general, and should not single out, or affect, any one particular part or party of the people, who gave no provocation to any such law, and whose conduct stood hitherto unimpeached, ever since the ratification of the aforesaid Articles of Limerick. To make any law that shall single any particular part of the people out from the rest, and take from them what by right of birth, and all the preceding laws of the land, had been confirmed to and entailed upon them, will be an apparent violation of the original institution of all right, and an ill precedent to any that hereafter might dislike either the present or any other settlement, which should be in their power to alter ; the consequence of which is hard to imagine."

The Lord Chancellor having then summed up all that was offered at the bar, the House of Lords proceeded to pass the bill without delay. And it is really remarkable that in neither House did one single peer or commoner offer a word of remonstrance against its passage. A few days after, on the 4th of March, it received the royal assent.

The penal code might now be considered tolerably complete ; and the nine-tenths of the population of Ireland was thus effectually brought down under the feet of the other one-tenth ; so absolutely subjugated, indeed, that they could not possibly be depressed lower, unless they had been actually bought and sold

as slaves. Forbidden to teach or to be taught, whether at home or abroad, deprived of necessary arms for self-defence, or even for the chase; disabled from being so much as game-keepers, lest any of them should learn the use of firearms; and provision being made for gradually impoverishing the Catholic families who still owned any thing, and preventing the industrious from making themselves independent by their labour—it would be hard to point out any people of ancient or modern times who groaned under a more ingenious, torturing, and humiliating oppresssion. Yet one peculiarity is to be remarked in the administration of these laws:—they were so applied, for generations, as to allow a bare toleration to Catholic worship, provided that worship were practised in mean and obscure places, provided there were no clergy in the kingdom but simple secular priests; who were also compelled to register their names and the parishes “of which they pretended to be Popish priests”—the penalty for saying Mass out of those registered parishes being transportation, and in case of return, *death*. On these terms, then, it was practically permitted to Catholics to attend at the service of their religion, although this was contrary to an express law, namely, to the “Act of Uniformity,” which required all persons not having lawful excuse to attend on the services of the Established Church. But throughout all this reign of Anne, and the two succeeding reigns, there was no such relaxation as this allowed in any matter relating to property, privilege, or trade: in all these matters the code was executed with the most rigorous severity. So that it is plain the object of the Ascendency was not so much to convert Catholics to Protestantism, as to convert the goods of Catholics to Protestant use. This is the main difference between the Catholic persecutions on the Continent at that period and the Protestant persecutions in Ireland: and it fully justifies the reflection of a late writer—“It may be a circumstance in favour of the Protestant code (or it may not), that whereas Catholics have really persecuted for religion, ‘enlightened’ Protestants only made a pretext of religion; taking no thought what became of Catholic souls, if only they could get possession of Catholic lands and goods. Also we may remark, that Catholic governments in their persecutions always really desired the conversion of misbelievers (albeit their methods were rough); but in Ireland, if the people had universally turned Catholic, it would have defeated the whole scheme.”

The recall of the Edict of Nantes, which edict had secured toleration for Protestantism in France, is bitterly dwelt upon by English writers as the heaviest reproach which weighs on the

memory of King Louis the Fourteenth. The recall of the edict had taken place in 1685, only a few years before the passage of this Irish "Act to prevent the further growth of Popery." The differences between the two transactions are mainly these two: *first*, that the French Protestants had not been guaranteed their civil and religious rights by any treaty, as the Irish Catholics, thought they held theirs by the Treaty of Limerick; *second*, that the penalties denounced against French Protestants by the *recalling* edict bore entirely upon their religious service itself, and were truly intended to induce and force the Huguenots to become Catholics; there being no confiscations except in cases of relapse, and in cases of quitting the kingdom; but there was nothing of all the complicated machinery above described, for beggaring one portion of the population, and giving its spoils to the other part. We may add, that the penalties and disabilities in France lasted a much shorter time than in Ireland; and that French Protestants were restored to perfect civil and religious equality with their countrymen in every respect forty years before the "Catholic Relief Act" purported to emancipate the Irish Catholics, who are not, indeed, emancipated yet. Mr. Burke, in his excellent tract on the penal laws, comparing the recall of the Nantes Edict with our Irish system, says with great force:—

"This act of injustice, which let loose on that monarch such a torrent of invective and reproach, and which threw so dark a cloud over all the splendour of a most illustrious reign, falls far short of the case in Ireland. The privileges which the Protestants of that kingdom enjoyed antecedent to this revocation, were far greater than the Roman Catholics of Ireland ever aspired to under a contrary establishment. The number of their sufferers, if considered absolutely, is not the half of ours; if considered relatively to the body of each community, it is not perhaps a twentieth part; and then the penalties and incapacities which grew from that revocation are not so grievous in their nature, nor so certain in their execution, nor so ruinous by a great deal to the civil prosperity of the State, as those which were established for a perpetual law in our unhappy country."

Readers will turn with pleasure from the gloomy and painful scene presented by Ireland in that dismal time, to the other half of Ireland, the choicest of the whole nation; which was to be found in all the camps and fields of Europe, wherever gallant feats of arms were to be done. The gallant Justin MacCarthy, Lord Mountcashel, had long been dead, having fallen on the field of Staffardo under Marshal Catinat, in 1790; where a brigade of Irish troops had been serving in the French army before the



surrender of Limerick. The arrival of Sarsfield, with so many distinguished officers and veteran troops, gave occasion to the formation of the "New Irish Brigade;" and we have seen with how much distinction that corps had fought against England on so many fields of the Netherlands. In the new war which followed the accession of Queen Anne, bodies of the Irish forces served in each of the great French armies. There were four regiments of cavalry, Galway's, Kilmallock's Sheldon's and Clare's—the last commanded by O'Brien, Lord Clare, constantly employed in these wars—and at least seven regiments of infantry. All these corps were kept more than full by new arrivals of exiles and emigrants.

It will afford a relief from the irksome tale of oppression at home, to tell how some of these exiles acquitted themselves when they had the good luck to meet on some foreign field either Englishmen or the allies of England. About the time when the lawyers of the "Ascendency" were elaborating in Dublin their bill for the plunder of Catholic widows and orphans, it happened that there were two regiments, Dillon's (one of Mountcashel's old brigade) and Burke's, called the Athlone regiment, which formed part of the garrison of Cremona on the bank of the Po. The French commander was the Duke de Villeroy, who had just brought his whole army into Cremona, after an unsuccessful affair with Prince Eugene at Chiari. Cremona was then, as it is now, a very strong fortified town; and the duke intended to rest his forces there for a time, as it was the depth of winter. The enterprising Prince Eugene planned a surprise: he had procured for himself some traitorous intelligence in the town, and some of his grenadiers had already been introduced by a clever stratagem. Large bodies of troops had approached close to the town by various routes; and all was ready for the grand operation on the night of the 2nd of February, 1702. Villeroy and his subordinates were of course much to blame for having suffered all the preparations for so grand a military operation to be brought to perfection up to the very moment of execution. The marshal was peacefully sleeping: he was awaked by volleys of musketry. He dressed and mounted in great haste; and the first thing he met in the streets was a squadron of Imperial cavalry, who made him prisoner, his captor being an Austrian officer named Mac-Donnell. Prince Eugene, with Count Stahremberg, Commerci, and seven thousand men, were already in the heart of the town, and occupying the great square. It was four o'clock on a February morning, when all this had been accomplished; and Prince Eugene thought the place already won. when the French



troops only began to turn out of their beds, and dress. Alarm was soon given. The regiment des Vaisseaux and the two Irish regiments are the only corps mentioned by M. de Voltaire as having distinguished themselves in turning the fortune of that terrible morning; and as Voltaire is not usually favourably, nor even just to the Irish, it is well to transcribe first his narrative of the affair. "The Chevalier d'Entragues was to hold a review that day in the town of the regiment des Vaisseaux, of which he was colonel; and already the soldiers were assembling at four o'clock at one extremity of the town just as Prince Eugene was entering by the other. D'Entragues begins to run through the streets with the soldiers; resists such Germans as he encounters and gives time to the rest of the garrison to hurry up. Officers and soldiers, pell-mell, some half armed, others almost naked, without direction, without order, fill the streets and public places. They fight in confusion, intrench themselves from street to street, from place to place. Two Irish regiments, who made part of the garrison, arrest the advance of the Imperialists. Never town was surprised with more skill, nor defended with so much valour. The garrison consisted of about five thousand men: Prince Eugene had not yet brought in more than four thousand. A large detachment of his army was to arrive by the Po bridge: the measures were well taken; but another chance deranged all. This bridge over the Po, insufficiently guarded by about a hundred French soldiers, was to have been seized by a body of German cuirassiers, who, at the moment Prince Eugene was entering the town, were commanded to go and take possession of it. For this purpose it was necessary that having first entered by the southern gate, they should instantly go outside of the city in a northern direction by the Po gate, and then hasten to the bridge. But in going thither the guide who led them was killed by a musket-ball fired from a window. The cuirassiers take one street for another. In this short interval, the Irish spring forward to the gate of the Po: they fight and repulse the cuirassiers. The Marquis de Praslin profits by the moment to cut down the bridge. The succour which the enemy counted on did not arrive, and the town was saved.\* But the fighting was by no means over with the repulse of Count Merci's reinforcements: a furious combat raged all the morning in the streets; and Mahony and Burke had still

\* Some of the Irish accounts of this achievement are too glowing, perhaps, as is natural. Even according to Voltaire's narration, the Irish soldiers really did every thing which he says was done at all; beat Prince Eugene's troops in the city itself, and saved the Po gate from the other detachment under the Count Merci.

much to do. At last the whole Imperialist force was finally repulsed ; and the soldiers then got time to put on their jackets. Colonel Burke lost of his regiment seven officers and forty-two soldiers killed, and nine officers and fifty soldiers wounded. Dillon's regiment, commanded that day by Major Mahony, lost one officer and forty-nine soldiers killed, and twelve officers and seventy-nine soldiers wounded.

King Louis sent formal thanks to the two Irish regiments, and raised their pay from that day.

In the campaigns of 1703 the Irish had at least their full share of employment and of honour. Under Vendôme, they made their mark in Italy, on the fields of Vittoria, Luzzara, Cassano, and Calcinato. On the Rhine, they were still more distinguished, especially at Freidlingen and Spires, in which latter battle a splendid charge of Nugent's horse saved the fortune of the day. After this year the military fortune of France declined ; but, whether in victory or defeat, the Brigade was still fighting by their side ; nor is there any record of an Irish regiment having behaved badly on any field.

At the battle of Höchstet or Blenheim, in 1704, Marshal Tallard was defeated and taken prisoner by Marlborough and Eugene. The French and Bavarians lost 10,000 killed, 13,000 prisoners, and 90 pieces of cannon. Yet amid this monstrous disaster, Clare's dragoons were victorious over a portion of Eugene's famous cavalry, and took two standards. And in the battle of Ramillies, in 1706, where Villeroy was utterly routed, Clare's dragoons attempted to cover the wreck of the retreating French, broke through an English regiment, and followed them into the thronging van of the Allies. Mr. Forman states that they were generously assisted out of this predicament by an Italian regiment, and succeeded in carrying off the English colours they had taken.

At the sad days of Oudenarde and Malplaquet, some of them were also present ; but to the victories which brightened this time, so dark to France, the Brigade contributed materially. At the battle of Almanza (13th March, 1707), several Irish regiments served under Berwick. In the early part of the day the Portuguese and Spanish auxiliaries of England were broken, but the English and Dutch fought successfully for a long time ; nor was it till repeatedly charged by the *élite* of Berwick's army, including the Irish, that they were forced to retreat. 3,000 killed, 10,000 prisoners, and 120 standards, attested the magnitude of the victory. It put King Philip on the throne of Spain. In the siege of Barcelona, Dillon's regiment fought with great effect.

In their ranks was a boy of twelve years old ; he was the son of a Galway gentleman, Mr. Lally or O'Lally, of Tulloch na Daly, and his uncle had sat in James's Parliament of 1689. This boy, so early trained, was afterwards the famous Count Lally de Tollendal, whose services in every part of the globe make his execution a stain upon the honour as well as upon the justice of Louis XVI. When Villars swept off the whole of Albemarle's battalions at Denain, in 1712, the Irish were in his van.

The treaty of Utrecht and the dismissal of Marlborough put an end to the war in Flanders, but still many of the Irish continued to serve in Italy and Germany, and thus fought at Parma, Guastalla, and Philipsburg.

It was not alone in the French service that our military exiles won renown. The O'Donnells, O'Neills, and O'Reillys, with the relics of their Ulster clans, preferred to fight under the Spanish flag : and in the war of the "Spanish Succession," Spain had five Irish regiments in her army ; whose commanders were O'Reillys, O'Garas, Lacys, Wogans, and Lawlesses. For several generations a succession of Irish soldiers of rank and distinction were always to be found under the Spanish standard ; and in that kingdom those who had been chiefs in their own land were always recognized as "Grandees," the equals of the proudest nobles of Castile. Hence the many noble families of Irish race and name still to be found in Spain at this day. The Peninsular War, in the beginning of the present century, found a Blake generalissimo of the Spanish armies ; while an O'Neill commanded the troops of Aragon ; and O'Donnells and O'Reillys held high grades as general officers. All these true Irishmen were lost to their own country, and were forced to shed their blood for the stranger, while their kindred at home so much needed their counsels and their swords : but it was the settled policy of England, and the English colony, now and for long after, to make it impossible for men of spirit and ambition to live in Ireland, so that the remaining masses of abject people might be the more helpless in the hands of their enemies.

But it is time to turn away from those stirring scenes of glory on the Continent, at least for the present, and look back upon the sombre picture presented by one unvarying record of misery and oppression at home.

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## CHAPTER VI.

1704—1714.

DURING all the rest of the reign of Anne, the law for preventing the growth of Popery was as rigorously executed all over the island, as it was possible for such laws to be: and there was the keen personal interest of the Protestant inhabitants of every town and district, always excited and kept on the stretch to discover and inform upon such unfortunate Catholics as had contrived to remain in possession of some of those estates, leaseholds, or other interests which were now by law capable of being held by Protestants alone. Every Catholic suspected his Protestant neighbour of prying into his affairs and dealings for the purpose of plundering him. Every Protestant suspected his Catholic neighbour of concealing some property, or privately receiving the revenue of some trust, and thus keeping him, the Protestant, out of his own. Mutual hatred and distrust kept the two races apart; and there was no social intercourse or good neighbourhood between them. Informers of course were busy, and well rewarded; yet there were many of the Catholic families who cheated their enemies out of their prey, by real or pretended conversions to the Established Church, or else by secret trusts vested legally in some friendly Protestant; who ran, however, very heavy risks by this kind proceeding.

For on the 17th of March, a few days after the passage of the Act of 1704, the Commons passed unanimously a resolution, "that all magistrates and other persons whatsoever, who neglected or omitted to put it in due execution, were betrayers of the liberties of the kingdom." Again, in June, 1705, they "resolved, that the saying or hearing of Mass, by persons who had not taken the oath of abjuration, tended to advance the interest of the *Pretender*," although it was then very well known that the Irish Catholics were not thinking in the least of the Pretender, or of placing their hopes in a counter-revolution to bring in the Stuarts. This resolution, therefore, was simply intended to make Papists odious and to stimulate the zeal of informers, against those who said or heard Mass in any other manner, or under any other condition than those prescribed for registering "the pretended Popish priests." But as it was still difficult to induce men to discover and inform upon unoffending neighbours, and as in fact the trade of informer was held infamous by all fair-minded men, the Commons took care also to resolve *unanimously*, "that the prosecuting and informing against Papists was an honourable service to the



Government." The informers being now, therefore, honourable by law, and taken under the special favour of the Government, gave such new and extensive development to their peculiar industry as made it for long after the most profitable branch of business in this impoverished country, and afforded some compensation for the ruin of the woollen manufacture and other honest trades.

The Earl of Pembroke, Lord Lieutenant in the year 1706, made a speech to the Parliament, in which he endeavoured to soothe the feelings of the Dissenters disabled by the Sacramental Test, and to combine all Protestants in a cordial union against the hated Papists. He recommended them to provide for the security of the realm against their foreign and domestic enemies—by which latter phrase he meant Catholics—and added, "that he was commanded by her Majesty to inform them that her Majesty, considering the number of Papists in Ireland, would be glad of an expedient for the strengthening the interest of her Protestant subjects in that kingdom." Fear of the "common enemy"—the established Parliamentary term to describe Catholics, was often urged as an inducement to mitigate the disabilities of Dissenters; and this controversy continued many years. The Established Church party was resolved not to relax any part of their code of exclusion; and had perfect confidence that the Dissenters, though pressed themselves by one portion of the penal code, would never, under any provocation, make common cause with Catholics. And this confidence was well-founded. The Dissenters preferred to endure exclusion by the Test, rather than weaken in any way the great Protestant interest; and the few representatives whom the Ulster Presbyterians had in the Commons never, in a single instance, gave a voice against any new rigour or penalty imposed upon the "common enemy."

It was in the year 1707 that the English Government at length accomplished its long desired project of an Union between England and Scotland. There was much indignant resistance against the measure by patriotic Scotsmen; and it needed much intrigue and no little bribery, judiciously distributed (as in Ireland ninety-three years later), to overcome the opposition. An English historian\* gives this simple account of the matter:—"Exclusive of the methods used to allay the popular resentment and the sacrifices made to national prejudice, other means were adopted to facilitate the final passing of the Act of Union. By the report of the Commissioners of Public Accounts, delivered in some years after this time, it appears that the sum of twenty thousand pounds,

\* Belsham. "History of Great Britain from the Revolution." Book V.

*and upwards*, was remitted at the present juncture to Scotland, which was distributed so judiciously that the rage of opposition suddenly subsided ; and the treaty, as originally framed, received, without any material alteration, the solemn sanction of the Scottish Parliament—the general question being carried by a majority of 110 votes.” In vain the patriots fought against the influence of the Court. In vain did Fletcher of Saltoun earnestly declare in his place in Parliament, “that the country was *betrayed* by the Commissioners. In vain did Lord Belhaven, in a speech yet famous in Scotland, pathetically describe Caledonia as sitting in the midst of the Senate, looking indignantly around and covering herself with her royal robe, attending the fatal blow, breathing out with passionate emotion, *Et tu quoque, mi fili!* The measure was carried, and Scotland became a province. How similar all this to the scenes enacted in our own country, almost a century later ! But for the name of Lord Somers, the great engineer of the Scottish Union, we must substitute Castlereagh, make the bribery larger, and the intrigues darker.

It is worth noting that the Irish House of Lords, when the Union with Scotland was in agitation four years before, in 1703, addressed the queen in favour of a similar measure for Ireland. They now, in 1707, did so again, beseeching her Majesty to extend the benefits of her royal protection equally over all her kingdoms. The House of Commons did not favour this proceeding ; nor was it at that time regarded with complacency in England. Nothing further, therefore, was done upon the suggestion made by their lordships, who had probably got scent of bribery going on in Scotland, and naturally bethought them that they had a country to sell as well as other people. They were disappointed for that time ; but many of their great-grandsons in 1800 derived benefit by the delay in concluding that transaction, and received a price for their services, twenty times more princely than what could have been commanded in the time of Lord Somers.

The agitation in Scotland arising from the Act of Union, although entirely confined to the Presbyterian people of that kingdom, furnished a new excuse for outrage upon Irish Catholics. There was in truth a plot, extending through the south-west of Scotland, for raising an army, inviting the “Pretender” (Anne’s brother), and so getting rid of the Union by establishing again the dynasty of their ancient kings. On the first discovery of this project in 1708, forty-one Catholic gentlemen were at once arrested and imprisoned in Dublin Castle, without any charge against them whatsoever, but, as it appeared, only to provoke and humble them. It is indeed wonderful to read of the ingenious malignity with

which occasions were sought out to torment harmless country people by interdicting their innocent recreations and simple, obscure devotions. In the county Meath, as in many other places in Ireland, is a holy well, named the "Well of St. John." From time immemorial, multitudes of infirm people, men, women, and children, had frequented this well, to perform penances and to pray for relief from their maladies. Those invalids who had been relieved of their infirmities at these holy wells, either by faith or by the use of cold water, frequently resorted, in the summer time, to the same spot, with their friends and relations; so that there was sometimes a considerable concourse of people on the annual festival of the Patron Saint to whom the wells were dedicated. Such had been the origin of "Patrons" in Ireland. On these occasions the young and the old met together. A little fair was sometimes held, of toys or other articles of small value, and the day was passed by some in religious exercises, by others in harmless society and amusement. But amusement, or recreation, protection of saints, or benefit of prayers, was not presumed to exist for Catholics; and these innocent meetings were naturally assumed to have some connection with "bringing in the Pretender," and overthrowing the glorious Constitution in Church and State. They were, therefore, strictly forbidden by a Statute of this reign,\* which imposed a fine of ten shillings (and in default of payment, *whipping*) upon every person "who shall attend or be present at any pilgrimage, or meeting held at any holy well, or imputed holy well." The same act inflicts a fine of £20 (and imprisonment until payment) upon every person who shall build a booth, or sell ale, victuals, or other commodities at such pilgrimages or meetings. It further "requires all magistrates to demolish all crosses, pictures, and inscriptions that are anywhere publicly set up, and are the occasions of Popish superstitions"—that is, objects of reverence and respect to the Catholics. Thus, in Ireland, were made penal and suppressed those Patron fairs, which indeed have been the origin of the most ancient and celebrated fairs of Europe, as those of Lyons, Frankfort, Leipzig, and many others.

One other enactment of 1708 will show what kind of chance Catholics had in courts of justice; and will bring us down to the period of the *second* Act "to prevent the further growth of Popery." This law enacted, "That from the first of Michaelmas Term, 1708, no Papist shall serve, or be returned to serve, on any grand jury in the Queen's Bench, or before Justices of Assize, Oyer and Terminer, or gaol-delivery or Quarter Sessions, unless it

\* 2nd Anne, c. 6.



appear to the court that a sufficient number of Protestants cannot then be had for the service : and in all trials of issues [that is, by petty juries] on any presentment, indictment, or information, or action on any statute, for any offence committed by Papists, in breach of such laws, the plaintiff or prosecutor may challenge any Papist returned as juror, and assign as a cause that he is a Papist, *which challenge shall be allowed.*" The spirit of this enactment, and the practice it introduced, have continued till the present moment ; and at this very time, on trials for political offences, Catholics who have been summoned are usually challenged and set aside.

In May, 1709, Thomas, Earl of Wharton, being then Lord Lieutenant, with Addison, of the "Spectator," as secretary, there was introduced into the House of Commons a "Bill to explain and amend an Act intituled an Act to prevent the further growth of Popery." It was introduced by Mr. Sergeant Caulfield : was duly transmitted to England by Wharton, was approved at once, and on its return was passed, of course. Its intention was chiefly to close up any loophole of escape from the penalties of former Statutes, and guard every possible access by which "Papists" might still attain to independence or a quiet life. Some, for example, had secretly purchased annuities—by this Statute therefore, a Papist is declared incapable of holding or enjoying an annuity for life. It had been found, also, that paternal authority or filial affection had prevented from its full operation that former Act of 1704, which authorized a child, on conforming, to reduce his father to a tenant for life. Further encouragement to children seemed desirable : therefore by this new law, upon the conversion of the child of any Catholic, the chancellor was to compel the father to discover upon oath the full value of his estate, real and personal ; and thereupon make an order for the independent support of such conforming child, and for securing to him, after his father's death, such share of the property as to the court should seem fit :—also to secure jointures to Popish wives who should desert their husbands' faith. Thus distrust and discord and heartburning in every family, were well provided for. One clause of the act prohibits a Papist from teaching, as tutor or usher, even as assistant to a Protestant schoolmaster ; and another offers a salary of £30 to such Popish priests as should conform. But one thing was still wanting : it was known that, notwithstanding the previous banishment of Catholic archbishops, bishops, &c., there were still men in the kingdom exercising those functions, coming from France and from Spain, and braving the terrible penalties of transportation and death, in order to keep up the



indispensable connection of the Catholic flock with the Head of the Church. It was known that this was indeed an absolute necessity, at whatsoever risk ; and that to pretend a toleration of Catholic worship while the hierarchy was banished, was as reasonable as to talk of tolerating Presbyterianism without Presbyterians, or courts without judges, or laws or juries. Therefore, this act for "explaining and amending," assigned stated rewards to informers for the discovery of an archbishop, bishop, vicar-general, or other person exercising ecclesiastical jurisdiction. For such a prize the informer was to have £50 : for discovering any monk or friar, or any secular clergyman not duly registered, £20 : for discovering a popish school-teacher or tutor, £10. Any two justices are also empowered to summon before them any Papist over eighteen years, and examine him upon oath as to the time and place he last heard Mass, and the names of the parties present, as well as concerning the residence of any Papist priest or school-master ; and in case of the witness refusing to testify, there was a penalty of £20, or twelve months' imprisonment. The informers were expected, after this, to be more diligent and devoted than ever ; and a proclamation of the same year, ordering all registered priests to take the abjuration oath before the 25th of March, 1710, under the penalty of *præmunire*, gave additional stimulus and opportunity to the discoverers. The trade of "priest-hunting" now became a distinct branch of the profession ; and many a venerable clergyman was dogged by these blood-hounds, through various disguises, and waylaid by night on his way to baptise or confirm, or visit the dying. The captured clergy were sometimes brought in by batches of four and five ; and the laws were rigourously put in force ; if it was a first offence they were transported ; but if any bishop who had once been transported was caught in Ireland again, he was hanged. Such is the main substance of the act for "explaining and amending," generally called the Second Act "to prevent the further growth of Popery." Lord Wharton, by commission, gave it the royal assent ; and for the zeal he had shown in recommending and hastening the act, the House of Commons voted his lordship an address, "gratefully acknowledging her Majesty's most particular care of them in appointing his excellency their chief governor, and earnestly wishing his long continuance in the Government," &c. His excellency desired the Speaker to inform them "that he was extremely well pleased and satisfied." Than this Lord Wharton no more profligate politician, no more detestable man, had ever been sent over to rule in Ireland. It is true that the well-known character given of him by Dean Swift must

be taken with some allowance ; because Wharton was a Whig, had been a Dissenter, and was still favourable to relaxation of the code against Dissenters. These circumstances were quite enough to rouse all the furious ire of the Dean of St. Patrick's, and draw from him a torrent of his foulest abuse. Besides, if the dean was enraged against Lord Wharton, it certainly was not for his tyranny to the Catholics, but rather for his partiality to the Dissenters : whereby, indeed, as we shall see, Wharton soon got into great disfavour with that very Parliament which had lately praised him so highly.

Jonathan Swift had already lived many years in Ireland, first as Vicar of Kilroot near Carrickfergus, and afterwards (in 1699) as Rector of Agher and Rector of Laracor and Rathbeggan, in the Diocese of Meath. He did not become Dean of St. Patrick's till 1713; nor much concern himself with Irish politics till several years later: but he was a country clergyman in Ireland during all the period of the enactment of the whole penal code, both in William's reign and in Anne's; he was himself witness to the ferocious execution of those laws, and the bitter suffering and humiliation of the Catholic people under them; yet neither then, nor at any later time, not even when in the full tide of his fame and popularity as a "patriot," did he ever breathe one syllable of remonstrance, or of censure against those laws. Swift is called an Irish patriot, and he was so, if zealous vindication of the claim of the English colony to rule the nation, and *to be* the nation, together with utter and acrimonious disdain of the great mass of the people and total indifference to their grievous wrongs, can constitute a patriot. But in truth the history of this extraordinary genius is a signal illustration of the position already stated—that in Ireland were two nations, and that to be a patriot for the one was to be a mortal enemy to the other. The period of Dean Swift's leadership in Irish (Colonial) politics had not yet arrived; and all his writings upon Irish affairs are dated after his appointment to the deanery: but it may be stated once for all, that this "Irish patriot" never once, in his voluminous works and correspondence, called himself an Irishman, but always an Englishman; that he sought preferment only in England, where he wished to live with the "wits" at Button's coffee-house; that when named to the Dublin deanery he quitted London with a heavy heart, to come over to his "exile in Ireland," over which he mourned in his letters as pathetically as Ovid exiled to Tomi; that he never, in all the numerous publications he issued on Irish affairs, gave one word or hint betraying the least consciousness or suspicion of any injustice being done to the Catholics; and lastly, that far from feeling any com munity of

race or of interest with the Irish, we find him thus expressing himself in a letter to his friend Mr. Pope, in 1737: "Some of those who highly esteem you are grieved to find you make no distinction between the English gentry of this kingdom and the savage old Irish (who are only the vulgar, and some gentlemen who live in the Irish parts of the kingdom), but the English colonies, who are three parts in four, are much more civilized than many counties in England," &c. Much will have to be said concerning Swift and his labours, a few years later in the narrative. For the present it is enough to point out that his furious denunciation of Lord Wharton and his administration in Ireland was by no means on account of that nobleman's urging on the bill for crushing Papists.

Lord Wharton had been brought up a Dissenter; though he had long ceased to regard any form of religion, or any tie of morality. He was, however, a Whig, and by party connections in England, was favourable to some relaxation of penal laws against the Irish Presbyterians. In his speech proroguing this Parliament of 1709, he said to the Houses that "he made no question but they understood too well the true interest of the Protestant religion in that kingdom not to endeavour to make *all Protestants* as easy as they could, who were willing to contribute what they could to defend the whole against the *common enemy*." But the majority of the Irish Commons belonged to the Tory party; and very soon dissensions and jealousies arose between them and the Lord Lieutenant, on account of his obvious bias in favour of the Dissenters. The Government of England also soon came into the hands of the Tory party through a series of intrigues regarding foreign politics, which are not necessary to be here detailed: and on the 7th November, 1711, the English Lords and Commons made a long address to the queen, complaining of Wharton for "having abused her Majesty's name, in ordering *nolle prosequi* to stop proceedings against one Fleming and others for disturbing the peace of the town of Drogheda by setting up a meeting-house"—a thing not seen in Drogheda, they say, for many years. They further complained, in this Address, of Presbyterians, "for tyranny in threatening and ruining members who left them; in denying the common offices of Christianity; in printing and publishing that 'the Sacramental Test is only an engine to advance a State faction, and to debase religion to serve mean and unworthy purposes.'" They therefore recommended that her Majesty should withdraw the yearly bounty of £1,200, then allowed to Dissenting ministers—the small beginning of that *regium donum*, or royal bounty, which has been gradually much



increased, to reconcile the Presbyterians somewhat to their disabilities under the Test law. During all the rest of this reign, and the three following, no representations on the part of the Dissenters of the injustice of this law, and no protestations of their loyalty to the English crown and House of Hanover, availed in the least to procure a relaxation of the odious Test. Their efforts in this direction only drew upon them, a few years later, the savage raillery of Swift, who maintained that the very Papists were quite as well entitled to relief as they.

It was in this year, 1709, that the scheme originated, of inducing Protestant foreigners to come to Ireland, and of offering them naturalization. Accordingly, on the request of certain lords and others of the council, eight hundred and seventy-one Protestant Palatine families from Germany were brought over, and the sum of £24,850 5s. 6d. appointed for their maintenance out of the revenue, on a resolution of the Commons "that it would much contribute to the security of the kingdom if the said Palatines were encouraged and settled therein." The German families actually were settled as tenants and labourers in various parts of the country. The scheme of the framers of this measure "seems to have been," says Dr. Curry, "to drive the Roman Catholic natives out of the kingdom, which effect it certainly produced in great numbers;" but the plan was not found to answer so far as the Germans themselves were concerned. They were neither zealous for the Queen's service nor for the ascendancy of the Anglican Church. It seems that only four, out of this great body, enlisted in her Majesty's army, though she was then engaged in a war with France, the very power which had ravaged their Palatinate, and left them homeless. The lords, in an address to the Queen in 1711, complain of "that load of debt which the bringing over numbers of useless and indigent Palatines had brought upon them." As for Dean Swift and the Tories, the way in which the German immigration was regarded by them is apparent from a passage in the Dean's "History of the Four Last Years of Queen Anne." He says, "By this Act, any foreigner who would take the oaths to the Government, and profess himself a Protestant, *of whatsoever denomination*, was immediately naturalized, and had all the advantages of an English-born subject, at the expense of a shilling. Most Protestants abroad differ from us in the points of Church Government, so that all the acquisitions by this act would increase the number of Dissenters"—which in Dr. Swift's eyes was as bad as increasing the number of Papists. Accordingly, he indicates his opinion of the whole scheme a little lower down, where he says, "It appeared manifestly, by the issue, that



the public was a loser by every individual amongst them ; and that a kingdom can no more be the richer for such an importation than a man can be fatter by a wen." The law for naturalization of Protestants was in fact soon repealed ; though no measures were spared to drive the Catholics away. And even such of the Roman Catholic natives as were afterwards willing to return, were not permitted ; for in 1713 the Commons ordered that " an Address should be made to her Majesty, to desire her that she would be pleased not to grant licenses to Papists to return into the kingdom."

It was even dangerous for them to attempt, or endeavour to hear, what passed in the House of Commons concerning themselves. For in the same year, an order was made there, " that the Sergeant-at-Arms should take into custody all Papists that were or should *presume* to come into the galleries."\* The Palatines, or their descendants, still remain in Ireland. They generally " conformed ;" not having any particular objection against any religion ; but caring little for the Ascendency, or the Whig or Tory politics of the country, at least for a generation or two.

The Duke of Shrewsbury was Lord Lieutenant after Wharton. The Duke had deserted the Catholic Church, and, like other converts, was more bitter against the communion he had left than those who were born Protestants. He was also a Tory. The Irish Parliament was dissolved ; and on a new election, the majority of the members were found to be Whigs. The short remainder of this reign, so far as affairs of State in Ireland are concerned, is quite barren of interest, the great affair being a quarrel of the House of Commons against Sir Constantine Phipps, the Lord Chancellor, because he was a noted Tory and close friend of the celebrated Doctor Sacheverell, the clergyman who preached the divine right of kings, and was therefore held an enemy to the " Glorious Revolution" and friend of the " Pretender."

All these matters were quite unimportant to the great body of the nation. The Catholics were either emigrating to France, or else withdrawing themselves as much as possible from observation ; some of them conforming and changing their names ; others reduced to the most pitiful artifices in order to preserve the little patrimony that was left in their hands ; but most of them sinking into the condition of tenants or labourers in the country (all profitable industry in the towns being prohibited to them) ; and it is from this time forward that thousands of the ancient gentry of the country, and even chiefs of powerful clans, stripped of their

\* Commons Journ., Vol. III.

dignities and possessions, and too poor, or too old to emigrate, had to descend to the position of cottiers and serfs under the new possessors of the land, who hated and oppressed them, both as despoiled Irish and as proscribed Catholics; and who hate them quite as bitterly to the present hour.

In the mean time, the war of the Allies against France had been attended with many brilliant successes, under the Duke of Marlborough and Prince Eugene. Some of the most signal defeats ever sustained by the arms of France were inflicted by the duke, particularly Blenheim, Ramilies, Oudenarde, and Malplaquet. But on the Court revolution which displaced the Whigs, Marlborough was deprived of his command, and the Duke of Ormond sent out in his place. Shortly afterwards the Peace of Utrecht was signed (11th April, 1713), by which treaty France recognized the Protestant succession in England, and the "Pretender" was compelled to depart from that kingdom; the union of the two monarchies of France and Spain was provided against, though a French Bourbon remained on the throne of Spain; and to the great loss and humiliation of France, it was agreed that the harbour of Dunkirk should be demolished. This treaty gave repose for a time to the Irish soldiers abroad.

The last year of Anne, therefore, was a year of peace abroad, but of violent party strife and political conspiracy at home. All the world expected a struggle for the succession at the moment of the queen's death; and King James the Third, called in England "Pretender," was known to have a large party both in that country and in Scotland, ready to assert his hereditary right. The agitation extended to Ireland; but did not reach the Catholic population, which was quite indifferent to Stuart or Hanoverian. The queen died on the 1st of August, 1714, the last of the house of Stuart recognized as sovereign of England, and leaving behind her, as to her Irish administration, so black a record that it would have been strange indeed if the Irish nation had ever desired to see the face of a Stuart again. Yet it is probable that she was secretly a Catholic, like all her family; and it is certain that she was bitterly displeased at the "Protestant succession," now secured by law to the House of Hanover. It is needless here to enter into the controversy as to whether she was altogether a stranger to the plots for setting aside that succession, and bringing in her Catholic brother. She was known to be deeply grieved and provoked by the zeal of politicians, both in England and Ireland, who, desirous of gaining favour with the coming dynasty, endeavoured to get an act of attainder passed against "the Pretender;" and a bill for that purpose in Ireland, which also offered a large

reward for his apprehension, was only defeated by a hasty prorogation. Yet "the queen hated and despised the Pretender, to my knowledge," is the assertion of Swift in his "Remarks on Burnet's History." Perhaps she did; most sovereigns hate their heirs-apparent, even when these are their own sons; but there is abundant evidence that she hated the Elector of Hanover and his mother very much worse.

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## CHAPTER VII.

1714—1723.

THE succession of the Elector of Hanover had been in no real danger, notwithstanding the plotting of a few Jacobites in England; although the Whig party anxiously endeavoured to represent the Tories as desirous of "bringing in the Pretender." The distinction, however, between Tories and Jacobites is important to be borne in mind; and a well-known letter of Dean Swift, who, being a Tory, had been accused of Jacobitism, is conclusive upon this point. In fact, although the English people and the English colony of Ireland were at that time nearly equally divided into Whigs and Tories, there were but few Jacobites, save in Scotland and the northern counties of England. Accordingly, on the death of Anne, the Elector of Hanover was duly proclaimed in both islands by the title of King George the First. In Ireland, the proclamation was made by torchlight, and at midnight; and great efforts were made to produce the impression that there was imminent danger of a Jacobite insurrection "to bring in the Pretender." This affectation of alarm, seems to have been intended to bring odium, not so much on the Catholics, as on the Tories: some arrests were made, and it was alleged that on one of the parties arrested, letters were found written by Dr. Swift. The populace of Dublin must at that period have been violently Hanoverian; for Lord Orrery tells us, that on the dean's return to Ireland after the proclamation of the new king, he dared hardly venture forth, and was pelted by mobs when he made his appearance. The bitterness and fury of party spirit at that day, is curiously illustrated by the story of the outrages and insults which the dean had to encounter, even at the hands of persons of rank and title. Lord Blaney attempted to drive over him on the public road; and Swift petitioned the Legislature for protection to his life. He was advised by his physician, he said, to go often on horseback, on account of his health; "and there being no place



in winter so convenient for riding as the strand towards Howth, your petitioner takes all opportunities that his business or the weather will permit, to take that road." Here he details the scene of Lord Blaney's attempting to overturn him and his horse, at the same time threatening his life with a loaded pistol, and prays protection accordingly. There is no doubt, however (without questioning the sincerity of the dean's zeal for the House of Hanover), that several of his most intimate friends, especially Lord Bollingbroke and Bishop Atterbury, were engaged in the plot, along with the Duke of Ormond, to prevent the succession of King George; and that the suspicions as to Swift's Jacobitism were at least plausible. Swift was excessively mortified, or rather irritated, by the popular manifestations against him. He was very covetous of influence and popularity, and his high, fierce spirit could ill brook the least demonstration of public reproach. He denounced the people of Dublin as a vile, abandoned race; but we hear no more of his Jacobitism, and not much of his Toryism, except that to the last hour of his life he hated and lampooned Dissenters.

Immediately after the accession of George I., all Tories were instantly dismissed from office, and the Government placed entirely in the hands of Whigs; which had been the very object of denouncing Tories as Jacobites. When the English Parliament met, articles of impeachment were quickly found against the Duke of Ormond, and the Lords Oxford and Bolingbroke, for high treason, in having contributed to bring about the Peace of Utrecht by traitorous means, and with a view of changing the Protestant succession. Bolingbroke and Ormond avoided the trial on the impeachment, by going to the Continent, where they both offered their services to King James III. (or the Pretender), then holding a kind of court in Lorraine, having been exiled from France at the peace. The party which adhered to the exiled prince was in fact making urgent preparations for a rising both in Scotland and in England; and on the 15th of September, 1715, the Earl of Mar set up the standard of insurrection, proclaimed King James the Third, at Castletown in Scotland, and quickly collected an army of ten thousand men. These forces were gathered from both Highlands and Lowlands, and consisted both of Catholics and Protestants. The Duke of Argyle, with his powerful clan of Campbells, was zealous for King George, and with other Highland tribes and some regular troops, met the Earl of Mar at Sheriffmuir, where a bloody but indecisive battle took place. A portion of the Jacobite force marched southward into England, were encountered at Preston, in Lancashire, by the King's troops, and, after a short fight,



obliged to surrender at discretion. Mar still kept his banner displayed, until King James the Third in person, landed at Peterhead, on the east coast of Scotland, in December; but very soon afterwards, on the approach of Argyle with a superior force, the enterprise was abandoned. The Prince and the Earl of Mar escaped by sea; the other leaders of the insurrection, both in England and in Scotland, were arrested, tried, and some of them executed. The rebellion was at an end, and from that day the exiled Prince may truly be termed, not James the Third, but the "Pretender."

This Scottish insurrection is of small moment to Irish history, save in so far as it furnished a pretext for fresh atrocities upon the unresisting people. There was no insurrection or disturbance whatever during all these events. We do not even hear of any Irish officer of distinction, who came from the Continent to join the Pretender's cause in Scotland; and the Earl of Mar, who afterwards published a narration in Paris, affirms that the Duke of Berwick, who was very popular with the Irish troops in France, had been urged to take the chief command of the movement, probably in order to draw some Irish regiments into it, but that "the Duke of Berwick positively refused to repair to Scotland," though he was half-brother to the Pretender. The insurrection of 1715, was therefore exclusively a Scottish and English affair. Some writers on this period of Irish history, who are entitled to respect,\* have given the Irish Catholics the very doubtful praise of loyalty, for their extreme quietness and passiveness at this time. It is true that they cared not for the Stuart family; yet, considering the excessive and abject oppression under which they were then groaning, and the slender prospect they had of any mitigation of it, we may assume that any revolution which would overturn the actual order of things, and give them a chance of redeeming their nationality, would have been desirable. But they were disarmed, impoverished, and discouraged; could not own a musket, nor a sabre, nor a horse over five guineas' value; had no leaders at home, nor any possibility of organizing a combined movement; so closely were they watched, and held down with so iron a hand. If they took no part, therefore, in the insurrections of 1715, and of 1745, it may be said (in their favour, not to their dishonour), that it was on account of exhaustion and impotence, not on account of loyalty. If they had been capable, at that time, of attachment to the Protestant succession, and of

\* Mr. Plowden, and Doctor Curry. They both wrote at a much later period; and both with a view of pointing out the folly of the Penal Code, as Irish Catholics had always, they said, been "loyal" to the House of Hanover.

“loyalty” to the House of Hanover, they would have been even more degraded than they actually were.

However, as the Pretender was a Catholic, and as the Irish Government knew that the oppressed Catholics of that country, if not always ready for insurrection, ought to have been so, numerous arrests were made during the Scottish insurrection. There were still some forlorn Catholic peers dwelling in their dismal country-seats, debarred from attending Parliament, endeavouring to attract no remark, and too happy if they could secretly keep in their stables a few horses for hunting. There were also still some landed gentlemen, though sadly stripped of their possessions, who tried to keep one another in countenance, and drank in private the health of King Louis, and the mole whose mole-hill killed William of Orange. It was desirable for the Government to take precautions against these sad relics of the once proud nation. Accordingly, the Earls of Antrim and Westmeath, Lords Netterville, Cahir, and Dillon, with a great number of untitled gentlemen, were suddenly seized upon and shut up in Dublin Castle, “on suspicion.” They were released when the insurrection was over.

In the mean time the Irish Parliament met, and was opened by lords-justices. The Houses, especially the Commons, were filled with the most fiery zeal for the Protestant succession, and most desirous of ingratiating themselves with the new dynasty. They passed acts for recognizing the King’s title—for the security of his person and government—for attainting the Pretender, and offering a reward of £50,000 for his apprehension. The Commons also presented an address to the new king, entreating his Majesty, for the security of the Government, and for the Protestant interest, to remove the Earl of Anglesea from all offices of honour and trust. Lord Anglesea was a member of the Council, and one of the vice-treasurers of the kingdom: he was a Tory, was suspected of being a Jacobite; and the reasons assigned in the address for removing him were, that he had caused or procured the disbanding of great part of the army in Ireland; and that he had connived at the enrolment of Irish Catholics for foreign service. “They had information,” they said, “that many Irish Papists had been, and continued to be, shipped off from Dublin and other ports for the service of the Pretender.” As usual, the main business of the Parliament was taking further precautions against the “common enemy,” for which the Pretender’s insurrection in Scotland served as a false pretence. The lords-justices, in their speech to this Parliament, bear complacent testimony to the calmness and tranquillity in which Ireland had remained

during the troubles, which Mr Plowden, with great simplicity, takes as a compliment to the “loyalty” of the Catholics—instead of being (what it was) a congratulation upon the Catholics being so effectually crushed and trodden down that they could not rise. This amiable writer cannot conceal his surprise at what he terms “the inconsistency of rendering solemn homage to the exemplary loyalty of the Irish nation in the most perilous crisis, and punishing them, at the same time, for a disposition to treachery, turbulence, and treason.” Nay, he is still more astonished at finding that “this very speech, which bore such honourable testimony to the tried loyalty of the Irish Catholics, bespoke the disgraceful policy of keeping and treating them, notwithstanding, as a separate people—‘We must recommend to you,’ said the lords-justices, ‘in the present conjuncture, such unanimity in your resolutions as may once more put an end to all other distinctions in Ireland than that of Protestant and Papist.’”

It may here be observed, once for all, to put an end to this delusion about Catholic loyalty in Ireland, that the Catholics would not have been permitted to be loyal, even if they had been base enough to desire it—that some abject attempts by some of them to testify their loyalty were repulsed, as will be hereafter seen—that when a viceroy or lord-justice speaks of “the nation,” at the period in question, he means the Protestant nation exclusively—nay, that the *law* was, that no Catholics existed in Ireland at all. It was long a favourite fiction of Irish law,\* “that all the effective inhabitants of Ireland are to be presumed to be Protestants—and that, therefore, the Catholics, their clergy, worship, &c., are not to be supposed to exist, save for reprehension and punishment.” Indeed, in the time of George II., Lord-Chancellor Bowes declared from the bench, “that the law does not suppose any such person to exist as an Irish Roman Catholic;” and Chief-Justice Robinson made a similar declaration.† It appears plain, then, that the “loyalty” of the Catholics towards the House of Hanover, if indeed there has ever been any such loyalty, could not have sprung up in their hearts in the reign of George I., or of George II.

No new enactments were made in this session of Parliament in aggravation of the Penal Code; but a resolution was passed recommending to magistrates the indispensable duty to put the existing laws into immediate and rigorous execution, and denouncing those who neglected to do so as “enemies of the Constitution;” no slight nor harmless imputation at that period, nor

\* See “Scully’s State of the Penal Laws,” p. 333.

† Ibid., p. 334.



one which any magistrate would willingly incur. In fact, the penal laws against Catholics were put in force at this time, and during all the remainder of the reign of George I., with even more than the customary ferocity, as a design to bring in the Pretender was supposed to lurk in every Mass. In many places chapels were shut up, priests were dragged from their hiding-places, sometimes from the very altars, in the midst of divine service, hurried into the most loathsome dungeons, and from thence banished for ever from their native country.\* “To the credit of those times,” however, observes Brenan, the ecclesiastical historian, “it must be remarked, that the description of miscreants usually termed *priest-catchers* were generally Jews who pretended to be converts to the Christian religion, and some of them assumed even the character of the priesthood, for the purpose of insinuating themselves more readily into the confidence of the clergy. The most notorious among them was a Portuguese Jew, named Gorzia (or Garcia). By means of this wretch seven priests had been apprehended in Dublin, and banished the kingdom. Of this number, two were Jesuits, one was a Dominican, one a Franciscan, and three were secular priests.” These last were probably “unregistered” priests; or else had not taken the abjuration oath, which was then legally obligatory upon them all, under cruel penalties. Indeed, by means of the various Statutes made against them, it may be affirmed generally that every priest in Ireland, whether regular or secular, was now liable to transportation and to death; because out of one thousand and eighty “registered” priests, only thirty-three ever took the oath of abjuration. The remainder stood firm, and set at defiance the terrors which surrounded them.†

Although the rebellion of the Presbyterians in Scotland was the sole pretence for this severity, and the very same law which banishes Popish priests prohibits also Dissenters to accept of or act by a commission in the militia or array, yet so partial were the resolutions of that Parliament, that, at the same time that they ordered the former to be rigorously prosecuted, they resolved, unanimously, “that any person who should commence a prosecution against any of the latter who had accepted, or should accept of a commission in the array or militia, was an enemy to King George and the Protestant interest.” Thus of the only two main objects of the same law, its execution as to one of them was judged highly meritorious, and it was deemed equally

\* Curry’s Review. Brenan’s Eccl. Hist. of Ireland.

† Hibernia Dominicana.



culpable even to attempt it against the other; though the law itself makes no difference between them. Such was the justice and consistency of our legislators of that period.

In the year 1719, the Duke of Bolton being Lord Lieutenant, occurred the famous case of Sherlock against Annesley, which provoked the Irish House of Lords into a faint and impotent assertion of their privileges, opened up once more the whole question between English dominion and Irish national pretensions, and ended in settling that question in favour of England; setting it, in fact, definitively at rest until the year 1782.

That cause was tried in the Irish Court of Exchequer, between Esther Sherlock and Maurice Annesley, in which the latter obtained a decree, which on an appeal to the Irish House of Lords was reversed. From this sentence Annesley appealed to the English House of Lords, who confirmed the judgment of the Irish Exchequer, and issued process to put him into possession of the litigated property. Esther Sherlock petitioned the Irish Lords against the usurped authority of England, and they, having taken the opinion of the judges, resolved that they would support their honour, jurisdiction, and privileges, by giving effectual relief to the petitioner. Sherlock was put into possession by the Sheriff of Kildare; an injunction issued from the Court of Exchequer in Ireland, pursuant to the decree of the English Lords, directing him to restore Annesley; the sheriff (let his name be honoured!), Alexander Burrowes, refused obedience. He was protected in a contumacy which so nobly contrasts the wonted servility of the judges, by the Irish Lords, who addressed a powerful State paper to the throne, recapitulating the rights of Ireland, her independent Parliament, and peculiar jurisdiction. They went further, for they sent the Irish barons to jail; but the king having the address of the Irish Lords laid before the English House, the latter reaffirmed their proceedings, and supplicated the throne to confer some mark of special favour on the servile judges, who, in relinquishing their jurisdiction, had betrayed the liberties of their country. An act was at once passed in the English Parliament, enacting and declaring that the king, with the advice of the Lords and Commons of England, "hath had of right, and ought to have, full power and authority to make laws and statutes of sufficient force and validity to bind the people and the kingdom of Ireland.

"And be it further enacted and declared, by the authority aforesaid, that the House of Lords of Ireland have not, nor of right ought to have, any jurisdiction to judge, affirm, or reverse any judgment, sentence, or decree, given or made in any court within the same kingdom; and that all proceedings before the said House

of Lords, upon any such judgment, sentence, or decree, are, and are hereby declared to be, utterly null and void, to all intents and purposes whatever."

This Declaratory Act is the last of the Statutes claiming such a jurisdiction. The Irish Parliament had to submit for the time; but the principles of Molyneux, soon after enforced with far greater power by Swift, worked in men's minds, and at last brought forth Flood and Grattan, and caused the army of the Volunteers to spring out of the earth. Once more, however, it should be borne in mind that this constitutional question was a question between Protestant England and her Protestant colony alone; and that the Catholic Irish nation had at that time no more favour or indulgence to hope for at the hands of a Parliament in Dublin than of a Parliament in London.

The Declaratory Act did not pass the English Parliament without opposition, especially in the Commons, where Mr. Pitt made himself conspicuous by his argument against it. It was finally carried by 140 votes against 88. The Duke of Leeds, in the Lords, made a powerful protest against the bill, but in vain.

In the same year, 1719, an act was passed in the Irish Parliament "for granting some ease and indulgence to the Protestant Dissenters in the exercise of their religion." The Duke of Bolton, in his speech, was pleased to commend this act most warmly, as a step towards consolidating the Protestant interest against the "common enemy." The Duke earnestly pleads for the necessity of union: "in the words," he says, "of one of those excellent bills passed this day—I mean an union in interest and affection amongst *all* his Majesty's subjects." The viceroy did not even feel it necessary to say "all his Majesty's Protestant subjects," knowing that this would be understood; so firmly established was the State maxim, that the law knows not of the existence of an Irish Catholic.

The year 1720 is memorable for the publication of Dean Swift's first pamphlet on Irish affairs—his "*Proposal for the Use of Irish Manufacture*." He had now been for seven years Dean of St. Patrick's: he had witnessed the enactment of many a penal law against Catholics: within hearing of his own deanery-house the Protestant mob, led on by *priest-catchers*, had dragged clergymen in their vestments out of obscure chapels amidst the lamentations of their helpless flocks, but he had never, in any of his numerous writings, uttered a syllable of remonstrance against this tyranny. It might be supposed that in this first of his tracts relating to an Irish subject, and a subject, too, in which people of all religions were deeply interested, he might delicately convey some hint that

neither the manufacturing nor any other material interest of a country could be promoted or developed while the great mass of its people were held in degrading slavery, disquieted in their property, and outraged in their persons by the extraordinary laws which he saw in operation around him. But not one word of all this does he write. He was well enough aware, however, of the growing misery and destitution of the country people; and says in this tract,—“Whoever travels this country, and observes the face of nature, or the faces, and habits, and dwellings of the natives, will hardly think himself in a land where either law, religion, or common humanity is professed.”

Again: “I would now expostulate a little with our country landlords, who, by unmeasurable screwing and racking their tenants all over the kingdom, have already reduced the miserable people to a worse condition than the peasants in France, or the vassals in Germany and Poland; so that the whole species of what we call substantial farmers will, in a very few years, be utterly at an end.”

It is very singular, also, that although he justly attributes the decay of manufactures to the greedy commercial policy of England in suppressing the woollen trade and other branches of industry—and although, at the moment he wrote, all the island was ringing with the Sherlock and Annesley case and the Declaratory Act, this future author of the Drapier's Letters never thinks of suggesting that laws for governing Ireland should be made in Ireland, in order that the English monopolists might no longer have the power of ruining our country by their own laws. It seems the time was not yet ripe for such a pretension on the part of Irish patriots; though, that the Dean very well knew the nature of the grievances he complains of, is evident from his savage sarcasm about the fate of Arachne. Ireland was becoming covered with herds of sheep, to produce wool for the English market, while English laws prevented its manufacture at home.

“The fable, in Ovid, of Arachne and Pallas, is to this purpose: The goddess had heard of one Arachne, a young virgin, very famous for spinning and weaving: they both met upon a trial of skill; and Pallas finding herself almost equalled in her own art, stung with rage and envy, knocked her rival down, turned her into a spider, enjoining her to spin and weave for ever, out of her own bowels, and in a very narrow compass. I confess that, from a boy, I always pitied poor Arachne, and could never heartily love the goddess, on account of so cruel and unjust a sentence; which, however, is fully executed upon us by England, with further additions of rigour and severity, for the greatest part of our bowels



and vitals is extracted without allowing us the liberty of spinning and weaving them."

Swift had not yet ventured to take the leading part which he soon after bore in Irish politics; nor did he ever take any part in them with a broadly national aim. He lived at that time very much with his friends, Sheridan and Doctor Delany; and his friends as well as himself, wished to be considered Englishmen.\*

The Catholic people remained all these years perfectly quiet and subdued. In them, all national aspiration seemed dead; so that the numerous enterprises projected all over Europe in favour of the Pretender, never counted upon them. One of these enterprises was undertaken by the Spaniards, under the auspices of Cardinal Alberoni; and the Duke of Ormond was placed in command of a Spanish squadron, to effect a landing somewhere in the British Islands. The Irish Catholics remained quite unmoved: they were, in the words of Mr. Plowden, "sternly loyal." It would be more accurate to say they were utterly prostrate, hopeless, and indifferent; and if they had been otherwise, the name of the Duke of Ormond would have been enough to repel them from any cause in which he was to be a leader.

The Duke of Grafton, as Lord Lieutenant, prorogued the session of Parliament, and in his speech was pleased particularly to recommend to them to keep a watchful eye upon the Papists; "since I have reason to believe," says he, "that the number of Popish priests is daily increasing in this kingdom, and already far exceeds what by the indulgence of the law is allowed." The Members of Parliament, in times of recess, and when they were at their country seats, must have followed the viceroy's exhortation, and kept a watchful eye upon the Papists; for the horror and alarm of the Protestant interest became more violent than ever before; and when Parliament assembled, in 1723, it was in an excellent frame of mind to do battle with the "common enemy." The Duke of Grafton, on meeting Parliament, recommended several new laws—"particularly for preventing more effectually the eluding of those in being against Popish priests," and the members had generally brought to town shocking tales illustrating the audacity of those outlawed ecclesiastics, in celebrating their worship,

\* In remonstrating with Mr. Pope on "having made no distinction in his letters between the English gentry of this kingdom and the savage old Irish," Swift adds, "Dr. Delany came to visit me three days ago on purpose to complain of those passages of your letters." Delany was the son of a convert; and though of pure Irish breed, at once took rank, in his own opinion, as an Englishman. There have always been many Englishmen of this species in Ireland.



sometimes even in the open day. It was full time, they said, to take decisive measures.

And in truth the ardent zeal and constancy, utterly unknown to fear, of the Irish Catholic priests during that whole century, are as admirable in the eyes of all just and impartial men as they were abominable and monstrous in the eyes of the Protestant interest. They often had to traverse the sea between Ireland and France, in fishing smacks, and disguised as fishermen, carrying communications to or from Rome, required by the laws of their Church, though they knew that on their return, if discovered, the penalty was the penalty of high treason, that is death. When in Ireland, they had often to lurk in caves, and make fatiguing journeys, never sure that the priest-hunters were not on their trail; yet all this they braved with a courage which, in any other cause, would have been reckless desperation. The English colonists could not comprehend such chivalrous devotion at all; and could devise no other theory to account for it than that these priests must be continually plotting with foreign Catholics to overthrow the Protestant interest and plunder *them* of their newly-gotten estates. This was the secret terror that always urged them upon fresh atrocities.

Accordingly, a series of resolutions was agreed upon and reported by the Commons; that Popery had increased, partly owing to the many shifts and devices the priests had for evading the laws, partly owing to the neglect of magistrates in not searching them out and punishing them—that “it is highly prejudicial to the Protestant interest that any person married to a Popish wife should bear any office or employment under his Majesty.” This measure was thought needful, inasmuch as some magistrates, having married Catholics, were observed to be remiss in taking informations against their wives’ confessors, knowing that they would have no peace in their houses afterwards. The resolutions further recommended, that no *convert* (to the Established Church) should be capable of any office, nor practise as a solicitor or attorney for seven years after his conversion, nor “unless he brings a certificate of having received the sacrament thrice in every year during the said term;” further, that all converts should duly enroll their certificates of conversion in the proper office. On the basis of these resolutions a bill was prepared; and the language and behaviour of Parliament on this occasion seems to have been even more vindictive and atrocious than had ever been witnessed before, even in an Irish Legislature. One of the most zealous promoters of this bill, in a laboured speech informed the House, that of all countries wherein the reformed

religion prevailed, Sweden was observed to be most free from those irreconcilable enemies to all Protestant Governments, the Catholic priests ; and that this happy exemption, so needful to the Protestant interest, was obtained by a wholesome practice which prevailed in that fortunate land, namely, the practice of *castrating* all Popish priests who were found there. A clause to this effect was introduced into the new bill.\* It passed both Houses, and was presented on the 15th of November to the Duke of Grafton, with an earnest request that his Grace "would recommend the same in the most effectual manner to his Majesty." His Grace was pleased to return this answer :—"I have so much at heart a matter which I recommended to the consideration of Parliament, at the beginning of this session, that the House of Commons may depend upon a due regard, on my part to what is desired." With the Duke's recommendation the bill was, as usual, forwarded to England. No objection to it had occurred either to his Grace, or to any peer or commoner in Ireland ; but an Irish agent in France presented a memorial on the subject to the Duke of Orleans, then regent. The two nations were at peace, and Cardinal Fleury, French Prime Minister, had considerable influence with Mr. Walpole. A strong representation was made by order of Fleury against the new bill.† As it has never suited British policy that its measures in Ireland should become the subject of discussion and notoriety amongst the civilized nations of the Continent (where English reputation for liberality has to be maintained) ; the council disapproved the bill ; and this was the first occasion on which any penal law against Catholics met with such an obstacle in England. Some writers on Irish history have been inclined to carry this failure of so atrocious a bill to the credit of human nature ; and Mr. Plowden, after narrating the French interposition, says, with his usual amiable credulity,— "But surely it needed no Gallic interference," &c.

At any rate, the bill was lost. The dependence of Ireland upon the crown of England saved the Catholics for once from at least one ignominious outrage. But there were already laws enough in existence to satisfy, it might be thought, the most sanguinary Protestantism.

His Grace the Lord Lieutenant, in his speech to that Parliament, at the close of the session, in order to console them for the loss of their favourite bill, gave them to understand, "that it miscarried merely by its not having been brought into the House before the session was so far advanced." And after earnestly

\* Curry's Review. Plowden.

† Brennan, Eccl. Hist. Plowden. Curry.

recommending to them, in their several stations, the care and preservation of the public peace, he added, "that, in his opinion, that would be greatly promoted by the vigorous execution of the laws against Popish priests; and that he would contribute his part towards the prevention of that growing evil, by giving proper directions that such persons only should be put into the commissions of the peace as had *distinguished* themselves by their steady adherence to the *Protestant interest*."

Everybody knew what that meant—increased vigilance in hunting down clergymen, and in discovering and appropriating the property of laymen; nor is there any reason to think that his Grace's exhortations were addressed to unwilling ears.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

1723—1727.

WHILE the Irish Parliament was so earnestly engaged in their measures against Popish priests, Dean Swift, who had lived in great quiet for three or four years, writing *Gulliver's Travels* in the country, suddenly plunged impetuously into the tumult of Irish politics. His indignation was inflamed to the highest pitch—not by the ferocity of the Legislature against Catholics, but by Wood's copper halfpence. The country, he thought, was on the verge of ruin, not by reason of the tempest of intolerance, rapacity, fraud, and cruelty, which raged over it on every side, but by reason of a certain copper coinage to the amount of £108,000, for which one William Wood had taken the contract and received the patent. Here was the crying grievance of Ireland.

It is necessary that the history of this transaction should be taken out of the domain of rhetoric, and established upon a basis of fact. A great scarcity and need of copper money was felt in Ireland; and this is not denied by the Dean. William Wood, whom Swift always calls "hardwareman and bankrupt," but who was, in fact, a large proprietor, and owner or renter of several extensive iron-works in England,\* proposed to contract for the supply needed, and his proposal was accepted. The national, or rather colonial, jealousy was at once inflamed; and already, long before Dean Swift's first letter on the subject, the two Houses had voted addresses to the Crown, accusing the

\* Cox. *Memoirs of Sir Robert Walpole.*



patentee of fraud, affirming that the terms of the patent had been infringed as to the quality of the coin, and that its circulation would be highly prejudicial to the revenue and commerce of the country. The Commons, with great exaggeration, declared that even had the terms of the patent been complied with, the nation would have suffered a loss of at least 150 per cent. ; and indeed the whole clamour rested on partial or ignorant misrepresentation. Wood's coin was as good as any other copper coinage of that day ; and the assertion of its opponents (repeated by Swift), that the intrinsic was no more than one-eighth of the nominal value of the metal, must be taken with great caution. If this assertion had even been true, the matter would have been of little consequence, because when coinage descends below gold and silver, it comes to be only a kind of counters for the convenience of exchange, deriving its value from the sanction of the government which issues it ; and being receivable in payment of taxes, it has for all its purposes the whole value which it denotes on its face.\* From the specimens, however, of Wood's halfpence preserved in the British Museum, and *fac-similies* of which are given in some editions of Swift's works, it is clear that the coins were of a goodly size, and with a fair impression ; and by an assay made at the Mint, under Sir Isaac Newton and his two associates, it was proved that in weight and in fineness these coins rather exceeded than fell short of the conditions of the patent.† However, the clamour was so violent, that "the collectors of the king's customs very honestly refused to take them, and so did almost everybody else," says Swift in his first letter of "M. B. Drapier." So that the crusade against Wood and his halfpence was already in full progress before the Dean wrote a word on the subject.

It is observable further, that this matter concerning Wood and his coinage did not really touch the great question of Irish national independence, or the insolent claim of the English Parliament to make laws for Ireland ; because the matter of coining money belongs to the royal prerogative ; and not one man of the English colony in Ireland, not Swift himself, pretended to question the authority of the King of England. In

\* The present base coinage of cent. and three-cent. pieces in the United States is an example of this. It is intrinsically of no value at all, being composed of the vilest of metal ; yet it answers all the purposes of small change, without injury to anybody.

† Report of the Committee of the Privy Council. Swift replied that Wood must have furnished the Committee with coins specially made for examination ; which is quite possible.



short, no more trifling occasion ever produced so brilliant and memorable a result. It seemed to be but an occasion, no matter how silly, that Swift wanted. Any peg would do to hang his essays upon; and he used the affair of Wood, as Rabelias had used the legend of Gargantua and Pantagruel, to introduce under cover of much senseless ribaldry, the gravest opinions on politics and government. Early in 1724 appeared the first letter, written in the character of a Dublin shopkeeper. It was soon followed by six others, besides letters to William Wood himself, "Observations on the Report of the Lords of the Council," "Letter to the whole People of Ireland," and many ballads and songs which were calculated for the Dublin ballad-singers. These productions were remarkable not only for their fierce sarcasm and denunciation directed against Wood himself, but for the constantly insinuated, and sometimes plainly expressed, assertion of the national right of Ireland (namely, of the English colony in Ireland) to manage her own affairs. This, in fact, was always in his mind. "For my own part," observes M. B. Drapier, "who am but one man, of obscure origin, I do solemnly declare in the presence of Almighty God, that I will suffer the most ignominious and torturing death rather than submit to receive this accursed coin, or any other that is liable to the same objections, until they shall be forced upon me by *a law of my own country*; and if that shall even happen, I will transport myself into some foreign land, and eat the bread of poverty among a free people." Indeed, while he seems to be directing all the torrent of his indignation against the unlucky hardwareman, he very plainly personifies in him the relentless domination of England, and really labours to excite, not personal wrath against Wood, but patriotic resentment against the British Government. A very admirable example, both of his style of denunciation, and of his exquisite art in insinuating his leading idea amidst a perfect deluge of witty ribaldry, is seen in this excellent passage:—"I am very sensible," says the worthy Drapier, "that such a work as I have undertaken might have worthily employed a much better pen; but when a house is attempted to be robbed, it often happens that the weakest in the family runs first to stop the door. All my assistance was some informations from an eminent person, whereof I am afraid I have spoiled a few by endeavouring to make them of a piece with my own productions, and the rest I was not able to manage. I was in the case of David, who could not move in the armour of Saul; and therefore chose to attack this uncircumcised Philistine (Wood I mean) with a sling and a stone. And I may say, for

Wood's honour, as well as my own, that he resembles Goliath in many circumstances very applicable to the present purpose. For Goliath had a helmet of brass on his head, and he was armed with a coat of mail, and the weight of the coat was 5,000 shekels of brass; and he had greaves of brass upon his legs, and a target of brass between his shoulders. In short, he was like Mr. Wood, all over brass, and he defied the armies of the living God. Goliath's conditions of combat were likewise the same with those of Mr. Wood: if he prevail against us, *then shall we be his servants*; but if it happens that I prevail over him, I renounce the other part of the condition. He shall never be a servant of mine, for I do not think him fit to be trusted in any honest man's shop."

But in the fourth letter of "M. B. Drapier," Dean Swift disclosed and developed without reserve his real sentiments, which, he says, "have often swelled in my breast," on the absolute right of the Irish nation (that is, of the English colony there) to govern itself independently of the English Parliament. On this point he thoroughly adopts and maintains the whole doctrine of Mr. Molyneux ("an English gentleman born here"), and denounces the usurpation of the London Parliament in assuming to bind Ireland by their laws. The proof that Swift, in affirming the rights of the Irish nation, meant only the English colony, is seen clearly enough in a passage of this very letter.

"One great merit I am sure we have which those of English birth can have no pretence to—that our ancestors reduced this kingdom to the obedience of England, for which we have been rewarded with a worse climate—the privilege of being governed by laws to which we do not consent—a ruined trade—a house of peers without jurisdiction—almost an incapacity for all employments, and the dread of Wood's halfpence." Rising and warming as he proceeds, he at length fairly declares, "In this point we have nothing to do with English ministers, and I should be sorry to leave it in their power to redress this grievance or to enforce it, for the report of the committee has given me a surfeit. The remedy is wholly in your own hands; and therefore I have digressed a little in order to refresh and continue that spirit so seasonably raised among you, and to let you see that by the laws of God, of nature, of nations, and of your country, you are and ought to be as free a people as your brethren in England."

For printing this letter, Harding, the printer, was prosecuted; but when the indictment against him was sent up to the Dublin grand jury, every man of them had in his hand a copy of another letter, entitled "Seasonable Advice to the Grand Jury," &c., which it seems they took to heart, for they threw out the bill. A

proclamation was then issued from the Castle offering a reward for discovery of the author, and signed by Lord Carteret, then Viceroy. Everybody knew the author; but public spirit in Dublin was then so high and inflamed that the Government could not venture to arrest the Dean. On the very day the proclamation was issued, he publicly taunted Carteret at the *levée* with thus persecuting a poor, honest tradesman, as he called "the Drapier;" adding "I suppose your lordship expects a statue in copper for this service you have done to Wood." In short, the cause of the halfpence was utterly lost: nobody would take them or touch them; the English Government had to withdraw the patent; William Wood turned his old copper to some other use in the hardware line; but received from the English Government a compensation in the shape of a pension of three thousand pounds for eight years.\*

From this time the Dean was the most popular man in Ireland; he became the idol of the shopkeepers and tradespeople. The Drapier was a sign over hundreds of shops; the Drapier was an honoured toast at all merry-makings; and precisely as he grew in popularity in Ireland; he became a more intolerable thorn in the side of the king's servants in that country, and especially of Primate Boulter. Boulter was appointed Primate in this very year, and one of the earliest letters published in his elaborate correspondence shows the extreme uneasiness with which that devoted servant of the English interest and doer of "the king's business" regarded the spirit aroused by the common resentment of all the people of all religions and races against the copper of Wood. He says in this letter:—"I find by my own and others' inquiries that the people of every religion, country, and party here are alike set against Wood's halfpence, and that their agreement in this has had a very unhappy influence on the state of this nation, by bringing on intimacies between Papists and Jacobites and the Whigs, who before had no correspondence with them: so that 'tis questionable whether, if there were occasion, justices of the peace could be found who would be strict in disarming Papists." For the next eighteen years this Primate Boulter was the real governor of Ireland. Thirteen times in that period he was one of the lords-justices, and as he had the full confidence of Walpole, and was fully imbued with that minister's well-known principle (the principle, namely, that all could be done by intrigue and corruption), we find him really dictating to successive viceroys of Ireland and also warning the English Government from time to time

\* Coxe, Life of Walpole.

who were the persons in Ireland that deserved encouragement and employment as the "king's servants," and who they were that merited reprobation as the "king's enemies," who obstructed him in doing the king's business. It is needless to observe that he became instantly a bitter enemy to Dean Swift, and more than once cautioned the ministry against whatever representations might come from that quarter.\*

Whether Swift so intended or not, he became, in fact, highly popular with the Catholics of the kingdom. Not that he ever spoke of them without disdain and aversion. "The Popish priests," says he, "are all registered, and without permission (which I hope will not be granted) they can have no successors." (*Letter concerning Sacramental Test.*) In short, whenever he does allude to them at all, it is always with a view of intimating that he has no appeal to make to *them*, not regarding them as a part of the nation. In the famous prosecuted letter itself—although it is addressed "To the Whole People of Ireland"—he takes occasion thus to repel one of the assertions of Wood:—"That *the Papists* have entered into an association against his coin, although it be notoriously known that *they* never once offered to stir in the matter." In his address, then, to the "Whole People," he speaks of the Papists as "they." But notwithstanding this, Catholic farmers had wool and grain to sell; they also had their daily traffic, and if the introduction of that perilous copper was to be so fatal to the Protestants, it could not be good for them. Moreover, the bold assertion of Ireland's right to independence pleased them well. They knew, it is true, that they were not for the present considered as active citizens; yet being five to one,† they also felt that if the heavy pressure of British domination were once taken off, they or their children could not fail to assert for themselves a recognized place in a new Irish nation. Up to the present date, the Irish Catholic freeholders voted at elections to Parliament (though their suffrage was cramped by oaths, and they could only vote for a Protestant candidate), and they could still make their weight felt in the scale either of Whig or Tory, either in favour of the king's servants or the king's enemies, as Dr. Boulter called them respectively. No wonder, therefore, that the Primate began to view with great alarm a community of feeling arising between the Catholics and either of

\* Letter dated 10th Feb., 1725, from the Primate to the Duke of Newcastle.

† Primate Boulter writes to the Archbishop of Canterbury:—"There are probably in this kingdom five Papists at least to one Protestant." This was in the year 1727.



the Protestant parties, and he soon cast about for a remedy, and found one.

Dean Swift was never openly attacked by the Primate, but he had been for some years subjected to the spy system, which is always so essential an arm of English Government in Ireland, and had found it necessary to use great precautions in securing his manuscripts, as well as his ordinary letters, from the vigilant espionage of the Government.\* When Wood's patent was withdrawn, and all apprehensions were over concerning the half-pennies, he was desirous to withdraw for awhile from the capital, and from the neighbourhood of Dr. Boulter's detectives, and went to the quiet retreat of Quilca, in the County Cavan, where his friend, Dr. Sheridan, had a house. Here he finished "Gulliver," which had been suspended for a while, and prepared it for the press; enjoying, by the shore of Lough Ramor, the conversation of Stella, and the "blessings of a country life," which he describes to be

"Far from our debtors,  
No Dublin letters,  
Not seen by your betters."

The next year Swift went to England, but before he went Primate Boulter wrote to Sir Robert Walpole a letter, which well illustrates the vigilance of that prelate in the king's service, and also the estimation in which he held Dr. Swift. He says, "The general report is that Dean Swift designs for England in a little time, and we do not question his endeavours to misrepresent his Majesty's friends here wherever he finds an opportunity. But he is so well-known, as well as the disturbances he has been the fomentor of in this kingdom, that we are under no fear of his being able to disserve any of his Majesty's faithful servants by anything that is known to come from him; but we could wish some eye were had to what shall be attempted on your side the water."

No further political event of much consequence occurred in Ireland during the short remainder of the reign of George I. All accounts of that period represent the country as sinking lower in misery and distress. Swift's graphic tracts and letters give a painfully vivid picture of the desolation of the rural districts. He laments often the wanton and utter destruction of timber, which had left bare and hungry-looking great regions that had but lately waved with ancient woods. New proprietors, under the various confiscations, had always felt in those times of revolutions,

\* Roscoe's Life of Swift. Sir Walter Scott's Life.

that their possessions were held by a precarious tenure; there might at any moment be a new confiscation, or a new resumption; therefore, as the woods would bring in their value at once they were felled remorselessly, and often sold at a mere trifle for the sake of getting ready money. It has been already seen that "the commissioners of confiscated estates" in King William's time\* speak of this destruction of the forests as a grievous loss to the nation. They estimate that "On one estate in Kerry, trees to the value of £20,000 had been cut down or destroyed; on another estate £27,000 worth;" and in some cases they say, "Those on whom the confiscated estates have been bestowed, or their agents, have been so greedy to seize upon the most trifling profits, that large trees have been cut down and sold for sixpence each." The consequence of all this wanton waste was soon lamentably observable in the nakedness of this once well-wooded island, where in Dean Swift's time it would have been impossible, as he tells us, to find timber either for ship-building, or for the houses of the people.

The condition of the farmers and labouring people was extremely hard in the latter years of this reign. As Catholics were subjected to severe restrictions if they lived in trading and manufacturing towns, their only resource was to become tenants for short terms, or at will, to an alien and hostile race of landlords, and this at most oppressive rents. "Another great calamity," says Swift,† "is the exorbitant raising of the rent of lands. Upon the determination of all leases made before the year 1690, a gentleman thinks he has but indifferently improved his estate if he has only doubled his rent-roll. Farms are screwed up to a rack-rent; leases granted but for a small term of years; tenants tied down to hard conditions, and discouraged from cultivating the lands they occupy to the best advantage, by the certainty they have of the rent being raised on the expiration of their lease proportionably to the improvements they shall make. Thus it is that honest industry is restrained; the farmer is a slave to his landlord; and it is well if he can cover his family with a coarse homespun frieze." Another of the evils complained of by the Dean is the prevalence of absenteeism, which carried over to England, according to his estimate, half a million sterling of Irish money *per annum*, with no return. Another still was the propensity of proprietors to turn great tracts of land into sheep pastures, which, of course, drove away tenants, increased the wretched competition

\* See their Report at the end of MacGeoghegan's History.

† "The present miserable state of Ireland."

for farms, and still more increased rents. It was this which made Swift exclaim, with his bitter humour, "Ajax was mad when he mistook a flock of sheep for his enemies ; but we shall never be sober till we are of the same way of thinking." To all these miseries must be added the decay of trade and commerce, caused directly by the jealous and greedy commercial policy of England ; and this grievance pressed quite as heavily upon the Protestant as on the Catholic.

So uniform has been the system of English rule in Ireland, that the description of it given a century and a half ago fits with great accuracy, and with even heavier aggravations at this day. The absentee rents are now ten times as great in amount as they were then ; and although the prohibition against exporting woollen cloth is now no longer in force, yet its effect has been perpetuated so thoroughly that the Irish do not now, as they did then, even manufacture woollen cloth for home consumption. In the year 1723, a petition was presented to Parliament from the woollen drapers, clothiers, and weavers of Dublin, setting forth the decay and almost destruction of their industry, the sore distress and privations of thousands of families that had once lived comfortably by prosecuting these trades, and asking for inquiry and relief. But an Irish Parliament, absolutely controlled by an English Privy Council, was quite incapable of applying any remedy ; so the affairs of trade had fallen from bad to worse, until at the close of this reign there was imminent danger of a destructive famine, that scourge which foreign domination has made so familiar to Ireland. It was in 1729 that Swift wrote and published his "Modest Proposal" for relieving the miseries of the people, by cooking and eating the children of the poor—a piece of the fiercest sarcasm, steeped in all the concentrated bitterness of his soul ; which, however—so grave is the irony—has been sometimes taken by foreign writers as a serious project of relief.

King George died on the 11th of June. 1727, just after settling the preliminaries of a peace with the Emperor and Spain, which was shortly afterwards signed at Seville (but to the exclusion of the Emperor) by the ministers of France, England, and Spain. Thus our exiles on the Continent were deprived for a time of the pleasure of meeting their hereditary enemies on the field. But further opportunities were happily to arise for them.

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## CHAPTER IX.

1727—1741.

THE accession of George II. occasioned no great excitement in Ireland. Lord Carteret was continued as Lord Lieutenant, but the corrupt and domineering churchman, Primate Boulter, a fit instrument of the odious minister, Sir Robert Walpole, still directed the course of Government, and always to the same end—the depression and discouragement of the Patriot party, as the assertors of Irish Legislative independence began to be termed, the complete establishment of English sovereignty, and the eternal division of Irish and English, of Catholic and Protestant.

The new king had acquired a reputation for a certain degree of liberality and tolerance, as indeed the first George also had before becoming king of England; because, in the electoral dominions in Germany, the Catholic religion was freely tolerated, and not subjected to the savage penalties and humiliating oaths which made that worship almost impossible in Ireland. The Irish Catholics, therefore, when the young king mounted the throne, conceived certain delusive hopes of a relaxation in the Penal Code. They were still smarting under the lash of the Popery laws, which had never yet been so cruelly laid on as during the reign of George the First; but as they remembered that the two last and severest of these laws were said to have been enacted as a punishment for their neglect in not having addressed Queen Anne on her coming to the throne, they were now induced to think they should avoid giving the like offence on the present auspicious occasion. An humble congratulatory address was therefore prepared, testifying unalterable loyalty and attachment to the king and to his royal house; and it met with the kind of reception which might have been expected. It was presented with all due respect to the lords-justices at the Castle of Dublin, by Lord Delvin and other persons of the first quality among them; but so little notice was then taken either of their address or themselves, that it is not yet known whether it was ever transmitted to be laid before his Majesty, as it was humbly desired it should be; or whether even an answer was returned by their excellencies that it should be so transmitted.

In other words, they and their abject “loyalty” were wholly ignored; and they received one additional lesson, if they still needed it, that they were to consider themselves not his Majesty’s subjects, but the “common enemy.”

They were soon to have still another lesson. Primate Boulter,



having observed with apprehension that the "Patriot" party was popular with the Catholics, and afraid of the results of this influence upon the next elections, took care to have a bill prepared, which was hurried through Parliament, for the entire disfranchisement of "Papists." Plowden and other writers affirm that the disfranchising clause was introduced into the bill by a kind of surprise or deception; but, however that may be, it passed both Houses and received the royal assent, enacting that "No Papist shall be entitled or admitted to vote at the election of any member to serve in Parliament as a knight, citizen, or burgess; or at the election of any magistrate for any city or other town corporate, any law, statute, or usage to the contrary notwithstanding."\* The Catholics were by this law deprived of the very last vestige of civil right, and of the only poor means they possessed of making a friend, or influencing any public measure. They remained utterly disfranchised for sixty-six years; and during all that period were as completely helpless as the beasts of the field.

Another transaction of this year may be considered as a lesson not only to the Catholics, but to the new king, supposing that they should dream of receiving some indulgence, or that he should imagine his German liberality would do for Ireland. In the year 1727 application had been made by certain Catholics to the late king for the reversal of some outlawries incurred by several "rebellious," and which had been most iniquitously obtained, and had actually reduced some of the most ancient, noble, and opulent Roman Catholic families of the kingdom, with their numerous descendants, to absolute beggary. The Commons then sitting, and justly apprehending from his Majesty's supposed equity and commiseration, that such application might meet with some success, resolved upon a petition, wherein, among other things, they tell his Majesty plainly, and even with a kind of menace, "that nothing could *enable them* to defend *his right and title* to his crown so *effectually* as the enjoyment of those estates, which have been the forfeitures of the rebellious Irish, and were then in the possession of his Protestant subjects; and therefore, that they were *fully assured* that he would discourage all applications or attempts that should be made in favour of such *traitors* or their descendants, so dangerous to the *Protestant interest* of this kingdom." This petition produced the wished-for effect. The king, in his answer, assured the Commons, "that he would for the future discourage all such applications and attempts."

\* 1 Geo. II., chap. 9, sec. 7.

But the Commons, not content with this assurance, and still fearing that those Popish solicitors, who had been employed by the Catholics in their late unsuccessful attempt, might prevail upon their clients to renew their application at another more favourable juncture, brought in a bill absolutely disqualifying all Roman Catholics from practising as solicitors, the only branch of the law profession which they were then permitted to practise.

Lord Carteret, in proroguing that Parliament, took occasion to congratulate it upon the several excellent laws which it had passed, amongst others the law “for *regulation* of elections.” At this date, then, the Catholics of Ireland may be said to disappear from history. But it was impossible to extinguish, or to keep down everywhere and for ever, the Irish race. An historian, who certainly shows no anxiety to say anything soothing or flattering of our countrymen, observes well:—

“There were, indeed, Irish Roman Catholics of great ability, energy, and ambition; but they were to be found everywhere except in Ireland—at Versailles, and at Saint Ildefonso, in the armies of Frederic, and in the armies of Maria Theresa. One exile became a marshal of France. Another became prime minister of Spain.\* If he had staid in his native land he would have been regarded as an inferior by all the ignorant and worthless squireens who drank the glorious and immortal memory. In his palace at Madrid he had the pleasure of being assiduously courted by the ambassador of George II., and of bidding defiance in high terms to the ambassador of George III.”†

Carteret’s administration, apart from the oppression of the Catholics, or perhaps, in part, on account of that very oppression, is usually praised by English historians for its wisdom and humanity. He certainly promoted some few trifling measures tending to the improvement of trade; but nothing touching, or in the slightest degree trenching upon, the domain of English monopoly, still less upon the absolute sovereign powers of the English Parliament over Ireland and all things Irish. The Primate, in fact, managed both the Irish Parliament and the Irish elections; besides taking great pains to foment quarrels and jealousies between Protestants and Protestants, between English and Irish, and even between the down-trodden Catholics. There had been differences of opinion amongst the latter on the policy of presenting their address of congratulation and loyalty; and the Primate writes to Lord Carteret with great complacency on the 20th July:—“I hear this day that the address yesterday presented by some Roman

\* Wall.

† Macaulay’s England

Catholic occasions great heats and divisions amongst those of that religion here," which he intimates may produce a good effect. He had his agents in all the counties canvassing and intriguing for the king's friends; and previous to an election he once writes to assure the Lord Lieutenant that "the elections will generally go well."\* In short, by the disfranchisement of five-sixths of the people, by a judicious distribution of patronage and place amongst the rest, and by the ever ready resource of the indefatigable Primate, the Parliament had become perfectly manageable, and the "Patriot" party was effectually kept down. Swift has described the Irish Parliament at this time as being

"Always firm in its vocation,  
For the Court, against the nation."

So that Lord Carteret's administration was naturally considered in England as quite a success.

But the famine that had been so greatly feared, now really visited the country with great severity, and slew its thousands for two years. No register, nor even approximate estimate of the amount of destruction of human life caused by this famine was made at the time, but in many counties people fed on weeds and garbage. Ireland was then importing corn, and it is mentioned, as a remarkable fact, that between two and three hundred thousand pounds worth of grain was imported in one year during the dearth. The famine returned a few years later, in 1741; and, in fact, famine may be said to have become an established institution of the country and constant or periodical agent of British Government from this time forth. There now began a very considerable emigration to America and the West Indies, and this emigration was almost exclusively of Protestants from the North of Ireland. Primate Boulter, in one of his letters, complains of this circumstance, but takes care, at the same time, to libel the emigrating Dissenters, alleging that most of them were persons who, having contracted debts they could not or would not pay, were flying the country to avoid their creditors. He takes care not to tell his correspondent in England the true reasons of this movement: first, decline of trade and hunger and hardship; next, the oppression of the Test Act, and of the "Schism" Act, a new law which had been very lately extended to Ireland by the sole authority of the British Parliament. The migration of Protestant Dissenters from Ulster, which commenced in Lord

\* Boulter's Correspondence.

Carteret's administration, afterwards took large proportions, and Pennsylvania, Western Virginia, North Carolina, and Georgia were in a great measure peopled by these "Scotch Irish," as they are called in the United States.

Carteret was succeeded by the Duke of Dorset, in 1731, but the change made no alteration in the even tenor of the Government, seeing that Primate Boulter was still really and effectively the Viceroy of the country. The Catholics were now giving no trouble—too happy if they could avoid observation; but there arose a most vehement agitation on the part of the Dissenters. These Presbyterians had contributed powerfully to the subjugation of Ulster under King William; had fought at Derry and at Newtownbutler, as well as at the Boyne and Aughrim; were devoted adherents to the Protestant succession and the House of Hanover, and had always aided and applauded the enactment of penal laws against the "common enemy." Now, when the "common enemy" was put down under foot, never, it was hoped, to rise again, the Dissenters naturally enough thought they should be entitled to the privilege of sitting in Parliament and entering the municipal corporations without taking the sacrament according to the rites of the Church of England, which was contrary to their conscience, but was imposed on them by law. They even made a merit of not having made common cause with the Catholics, although joined with them in a common injury on the passage of the "Act to prevent the further growth of Popery;" they had preferred to endure disabilities and insults themselves rather than in any way embarrass the Government in its measures against the "common enemy." For this base compliance they had their reward, and remained subject to the Test Act for three generations afterwards.

In their attempts to obtain a relaxation of this code during Dorset's administration, the Catholics found, of course, the sternest and most uncompromising opponent in the Primate; but—what they had not perhaps expected—the most indefatigable, the most efficient, the most offensive and disdainful enemy they had, was the Dean of St. Patrick's. For once the Primate and the Dean were on the same side. It does not appear, indeed, that there was the least chance at that time of breaking down in favour of Dissenters, the strong barriers that fenced round the interest of the Established Church on every side; but there was much discussion by political pamphlets, and for two years, Swift poured forth in very powerful papers his horror of Puritans, and scorn of Scotchmen. The most remarkable of these productions, is that entitled "Reasons; humbly offered to the Parliament of



Ireland, for repealing the Sacramental Test *in favour of the Catholics.*" This, like his "Modest Proposal," is a master-piece of cold and biting irony; intended to show that the Dissenters could not urge a single plea in favour of their own emancipation, which the very Papists could not bring forward with still greater force. The writer seems throughout to plead the cause of the Catholics, "called by their ill-willers, Papists," with so much earnestness, that very intelligent Catholic writers, as Plowden, Lawless, Curry, and others, have quoted it as a serious argument on their behalf. Indeed, it is not wonderful if straightforward, unsophisticated minds that understand no joking on so grave a subject, have been sometimes mystified by passages like this:—

"And whereas another author among our brethren, the Dissenters, has very justly complained, that by this persecuting Test Act great numbers of true Protestants have been forced to leave the kingdom and fly to the plantations, rather than stay here branded with an incapacity for civil and military employment; we do affirm that the Catholics can bring many more instances of the same kind; some thousands of their religion have been forced by the Sacramental Test to retire into other countries, rather than live here under the incapacity of wearing swords, sitting in Parliament, and getting that share of power and profit, which belongs to them as fellow-Christians, whereof they are deprived merely upon account of conscience, which would not allow them to take the sacrament after the manner prescribed in the liturgy. Hence it clearly follows, in the words of the same author, 'That if we [Catholics], are incapable of employment, we are punished for our dissent, that is, for our conscience,' " &c.

It gives us a singular idea of the narrowness of this "Irish patriot's" idea of patriotism, that he could conceive no more effectual way of casting odium and ridicule on the pretensions of Dissenters, than by showing that even the Papists themselves might plausibly urge similar pretensions; and although he was aware of the effect of these penal laws in driving both Catholics and Dissenters away from their native land, to carry their energy, their industry, and their resentments into foreign countries, he was yet earnestly in favour of retaining the whole system of penal laws unbroken against them both. The controversy soon died out, and was only occasionally and faintly renewed during the remainder of the century; but it is impossible to refrain from the expression of a regret, that the sovereign genius of Swift could not raise him up to a loftier and more generous idea of patriotism for the country of his adoption—or, as he always called it, of his *exile*—than this narrow and intolerant exclusiveness, which would

drive from their native land both Catholics and Protestants who could not take the sacrament as he administered it. He opposed English domination over Ireland, yet equally opposed the union of Irishmen to resist it. Therefore the verdict of history must for ever be, that he was neither an English patriot nor an Irish one. As was said long afterwards of O'Connell, "he was a bad subject and a worse rebel." Yet the tone of independent thought which rings through his inimitable essays, and the high and manly spirit with which he showed Irishmen how to confront unjust power, did not pass away; they penetrated the character of the whole English colony, and bore fruit long after that unquiet and haughty heart lay at rest in the aisle of St. Patrick's. *Ubi sæva indignatio ulterius cor lacerare nequit.*

The disfranchised Catholics being now deprived of their last and only means of gaining the favour and indulgence of their neighbouring magistrates, by promising to vote for their party, (all parties being alike to the Catholics), were made to feel the full atrocity of the penal laws. It seems really to have been the design of Primate Boulter to wear down that population by ill-usage to force them to fly the country, to get rid of them somehow altogether; so that the island might lie open to be wholly peopled by English Protestants.

Boulter was by no means the inventor of this policy; neither was he the last who acted upon it; but none ever pursued it with more diabolical malignity. If any clergymen desired to win the Primate's favour, he forthwith preached furious and foaming sermons against the execrated Papists. If any pamphleteer desired to make himself conspicuous as a "king's servant," and so gain a profitable place, he set to work to prove that all Catholics are by nature and necessity murderers, perjurers, and adulterers. The resolutions passed so frequently in both Houses of Parliament, exhorting magistrates to be active in enforcing the laws against the "common enemy," had sometimes been only partially effective, because the Catholics had a way of influencing country gentlemen to a certain extent. But now, under the Primate's auspices, it was not intended that such resolutions should be a dead letter.

On the 9th of March, 1731, it was "Resolved unanimously that it is the indispensable duty of all magistrates and officers to put the laws made to prevent the further growth of Popery in Ireland in due execution." It was also at the same time resolved, *nem. con.* (being the end of the session), "that the Members of that House, in their respective counties and stations, would use their utmost endeavours to put the several laws against Popery in due execution."

These frequent resolutions of the Commons, aided by inflammatory anniversary sermons and equally inflammatory pamphlets, occasionally preached and published, diffused such a spirit of rancour and animosity against Catholics, among their Protestant neighbours, as made the generality of them believe that the words Popery, rebellion, and massacre, really signified the same thing, and thereby excited such real terrors in these latter as often brought the liberties and sometimes the lives of the former into imminent danger. The most shocking fables that had been invented concerning the Irish insurrection in 1641, and of the English gunpowder treason in 1605, were studiously revived and aggravated in these sermons and pamphlets, with a degree of virulence and exaggeration which surpassed the most extravagant fictions of romance or poetry, and possessed their uninformed, though often well-meaning, hearers and readers with lasting and general abhorrence of these people. The crimes, real or supposed, of Catholics dead more than a century before, were imputed, intentionally, to all those who survived them, however innocent, of the same religious persuasion.

Dr. Curry affirms that by all these means the popular passion was so fiercely incensed against Papists as to suggest to some Protestants the project of destroying them by massacre at once; and that "an ancient nobleman and privy councillor," whom the author, however, does not name, "in the year 1743, on the threatened invasion of England by the French, under the command of Marshal Saxe, openly declared in council 'that as the Papists had begun the massacre on them, about a hundred years before, so he thought it both reasonable and lawful, on their parts, to prevent them, at that dangerous juncture, by first falling upon them.'"

The same respectable author, who was a contemporary of the events he relates, states that "so entirely were some of the lower northern Dissenters possessed and influenced by this prevailing prepossession and rancour against Catholics, that in the same year, and for the same declared purpose of prevention, a conspiracy was actually formed by some of the inhabitants of Lurgan to rise in the night-time and destroy all their neighbours of that denomination in their beds. But this inhuman purpose was also frustrated by an information of the honest Protestant publican in whose house the conspirators had met to settle the execution of their scheme, sworn before the Rev. Mr. Ford, a justice of the peace in that district, who received it with horror, and with difficulty put a stop to the intended massacre." \*

\* Curry's Historical Review.

The Irish House of Commons, during Lord Dorset's administration, was chiefly occupied by debates on money and finances. The latter years of Carteret's term had been much disquieted on account of an attempt, made by the king's servants, to get a vote of £274,000 to the Crown. The country party resisted vigorously; and then began a series of acrimonious debates on monetary affairs, which "the Patriots" treated with a view to assert, as often and as strongly as possible, the right of the Irish Legislature to control at least the matter of Irish finances. In this first session, held in the Duke of Dorset's government, the question came up again under another form on the vote for the supplies. The national debt, on Lady Day, 1733, was £371,312 13s. 2d.,\* and for the payment of the principal and interest, the supplies were voted from session to session. A gross attempt was now made to grant the supplies, set aside to pay the debt and the interest, to the king and his successors for ever.

This proposition was violently resisted by the Patriots, who asserted that it was unconstitutional to vote the sum for a longer period than from session to session. The Government, defeated in this attempt, sought to grant it for twenty-one years, and a warm debate ensued. Just as the division was about taking place, the Ministerialists and Patriots being nearly equal, Colonel Tottenham, an Oppositionist, entered. He was dressed in boots, contrary to the etiquette of the House, which prescribed full dress. His vote gave the majority to the Patriots, and the Government was defeated by *Tottenham in his boots*. This became one of the toasts of patriotism, and was given in all the social meetings.

But such triumphs of the country party were rare, and their effects were precarious. Every such event as this, however, stimulated and kept alive the aspiration after independent nationality; and the same Duke of Dorset, when he was in Ireland as Viceroy for the second time, had an opportunity to verify and measure the progress of that national spirit.

In 1737 Dorset was recalled, and was succeeded by the Duke of Devonshire, a nobleman of great wealth, who kept a splendid court in Dublin, and by the expenditures thereby occasioned, made himself extremely popular amongst the tradesmen of that city.† In fact, the English Government and its crafty chief, Sir Robert Walpole, saw the necessity of counteracting the perilous

\* Plowden.

† He also built Devonshire-quay, at his own expense, and presented it to the city.



doctrines of "the Patriots," by all the arts of seduction—by the charm of personal popularity, and especially by corruption—an art which, under Sir Robert Walpole, reached, both in England and in Ireland, a degree of high development, which it had never before attained in any country. As it was that minister's avowed maxim, that "every man has his price," he saw no reason to except Irish patriots from that general law; and Primate Boulter was precisely the man to test its accuracy in practice. All the influence of the Government was now needed to overcome the resolute bearing of the Opposition upon the grand subject of "supplies." The Patriots were determined, if the Irish Parliament was to be politically subordinate to that of England, that they would at least endeavour to maintain its privileges of voting its own money. It is in these debates we first find amongst the Patriot party the names of Sir Edward O'Brien, of Clare, and his son, Sir Lucius O'Brien, an illustrious name then, both at home and abroad, destined to be more illustrious still before the close of that century, and to shine with a yet purer fame in the present age. Henry Boyle, Speaker of the House of Commons, and afterwards Earl of Shannon, and Antony Malone, son of that Malone who had pleaded along with Sir Toby Butler against the penal laws of Queen Anne's time, were also leading members of the Opposition.

In 1741 there was another dreadful famine. It is irksome to record, or to read the details of this chronic misery; but in the History of Ireland the gaunt spectre of Famine must be a prominent figure of the picture, while English connection continues. The learned and amiable Dr. George Berkeley was then Bishop of Cloyne. A season of starvation first, and then, in due rotation, a season of pestilence, thinned the people miserably; and the good Bishop's sympathies were strongly moved. In a letter to Mr. Thomas Prior, of Dublin, he writes thus, under date the 19th May, 1741:—"The distresses of the sick and poor are endless. The havock of mankind in the counties of Cork, Limerick, and some adjacent places, hath been incredible. The nation, probably, will not recover this loss in a century. The other day I heard one from the county of Limerick say that whole villages were entirely dispeopled. About two months since I heard Sir Richard Cox say that five hundred were dead in the parish, though in a county, I believe, not very populous. It were to be wished people of condition were at their seats in the country during these calamitous times, which might provide relief and employment for the poor. Certainly, if these perish, the rich must be sufferers in the end."

It was while under the impression of these terrible scenes of

suffering that Berkeley wrote his celebrated pamphlet, entitled "The Querist," which sets forth, under the form of questions, without answers, the Bishop's views of the evils and requirements of his country; for Berkeley, unlike Swift, called himself *an Irishman*. Two or three of his queries will show the drift of the work. "Whether a great quantity of sheep-walk be not ruinous to a country, rendering it waste and thinly inhabited?" "Whether it be a crime to inquire how far we may do without foreign trade, and what would follow on such a supposition?" "Whether, if there were a wall of brass a thousand cubits high round this kingdom, our natives might not, nevertheless, live cleanly and comfortably, till the land, and reap the fruits of it?" Such queries as these, though very cautiously expressed, showed plainly enough that the excellent Bishop attributed all the evils of Ireland to the greedy commercial policy of England; and accordingly this pamphlet was quite enough to stop his promotion. The next year there was a vacancy for the Primacy; and as Berkeley was the most learned and famous man in the Irish Church (Swift being then in his sad dotage), the friends of the Bishop of Cloyne naturally thought him entitled to the place, especially since Sir Robert Walpole owed him some compensation for having broken faith with him in the matter of his Bermuda missionary college. But Berkeley himself expected no such favours. He writes to Mr. Prior with a touching simplicity:—"For myself, though his Excellency the Lord Lieutenant might have a better opinion of me than I deserved, yet it was not likely that he would make *an Irishman* Primate." And assuredly, Berkeley was not the kind of man needed to "do the king's business" in Ireland. Dr. Hoadley was the person appointed, and was soon succeeded by the notorious George Stone.

It would require a large volume to detail the numberless and minutely elaborated measures by which the English Government has at all times contrived to regulate the trade and industry of Ireland in all their parts with a view to her own profit; a system whereby periodical famines are insured in an island endowed by nature with such boundless capacity for wealth. We have seen that both Swift and Berkeley attacked the extensive "sheep-walks." In those years, corn was brought from England to Ireland because it suited the interests of England then to discourage agriculture here, and to encourage sheep-farms, all her efforts being directed to secure the woollen trade to herself. Accordingly it was forbidden the Irish to export black cattle to England, and, therefore, sheep became the more profitable stock; but as the Irish could make nothing of the wool, they had to send it in the

fleece, and thus Yorkshire was supplied with the raw material of its staple manufacture. But afterwards, when England had full possession of the woollen manufacture, and that of Ireland was utterly destroyed, it became apparent to the English, that the best use they could make of Ireland would be to turn it into a general store farm for agricultural produce of all kinds. Anderson (*History of Commerce*) explains the matter thus:—"Concerning these laws, many think them hurtful, and that it would be wiser to suffer the Irish to be employed in breeding and fattening their black cattle *for us*, than to turn their lands into sheep-walks as at present; in consequence of which, in spite of all the laws, they supply foreign nations with their wool."

It is observable that this English writer, when he says many think the laws regulating Irish commerce "hurtful," means hurtful to the English. Therefore, the system was afterwards so far changed, that England was willing to take any kind of agricultural produce from us, and to give us, in return, manufactured articles made either of our own or of foreign materials. So it has happened that Irishmen have been permitted ever since to sow, to reap, and to feed cattle *for them*, as Anderson recommended. But which of the systems bred more Irish famines we shall have other and too many opportunities of inquiring.

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## CHAPTER X.

1741—1745.

KING GEORGE II., like his predecessor, felt much more personal interest in German politics and the "balance of power," on the Continent, than in any domestic affairs of the English nation. He had adhered to the "Pragmatic Sanction," that favourite measure of the Austrian Emperor Charles VI., for securing the succession of the possessions of the House of Austria to the Archduchess Maria Theresa, Queen of Hungary. On the 20th of October, 1740, the Emperor Charles died, and all Europe was almost immediately plunged into general war. King Frederick, styled the Great, was then King of Prussia; and as the Austrian army and finances were then in great disorder, and he could expect no very serious opposition, he suddenly set up his claim to the Austrian duchy of Silesia, and marched an army into it, in pursuance of that usual policy of Prussia, which elaborately prepares and carefully conceals plans of aggression until the moment of putting them in execution, and then makes the stealthy spring



of a tiger. France embraced the cause of the elector of Bavaria and candidate for the imperial throne; sent an army into Germany under Marshal Broglie, and after some successes over the Austrians, caused the elector to be proclaimed Emperor at Prague. In April, 1741, King George II. delivered a speech to both Houses of his Parliament, informing them that the Queen of Hungary had made a requisition for the aid of England in asserting her title to the throne, pursuant to the "Pragmatic Sanction;" and thereupon he demanded war supplies. Some honest and uncorrupted Members of Parliament protested against this new Continental war; but Sir Robert Walpole still ruled the country with almost absolute sway; and to hold his place he supported the policy of the king. So began that long and bloody war; a war in which Ireland had no concern, save in so far as it was an occasion for larger exactions from the Irish Parliament; and also gave to her exiled sons some further opportunities of meeting their enemies in battle.

It was in 1741 that the famous Dr. Lucas first appeared in the political arena. He was a man of great energy and honesty; fully imbued with the opinions of Swift on the rights and wrongs of his country, that is of the English colony. He was even more offensively intolerant than Swift towards the Catholics; but within the sacred limits of the "Protestant interest" he supported the principles of freedom; and if he fell very far short of his great model in genius, he perhaps equalled him in courage. Charles Lucas was born in 1713, and his family was of the farming class in Clare county. He established himself as an apothecary in Dublin, where he was elected a member of the Common Council. He there found abuses to correct. The appointment of aldermen had been a privilege usurped by the board of aldermen, while the right appertained to the whole corporate body. Having agitated this subject for a while, he grew bolder with his increasing popularity, and published some political tracts on the sovereign right of the Irish Parliament. This attracted attention and excited alarm; for, "to make any man popular in Ireland," as the Primate bitterly remarks, "it is only necessary to set up the Irish against the English interest." Henceforward Dr. Lucas pursued, in his own way, an active career of patriotism, as he understood patriotism; and the reader will hear of him again.

In 1742 the Primacy of the Irish Church being vacant, by the death of Dr. Boulter, Hoadley was first appointed to the See of Armagh, but was soon after succeeded by that extraordinary prelate, George Stone, Bishop of Derry. It had long been Sir Robert Walpole's policy to govern Ireland mainly through the chief



of the Irish Established Church, and Stone was a man altogether after his own heart. He was English by birth, and the son of a keeper of a jail; was never remarkable for learning, and his character was the worst possible; but he had qualities which, in the minister's judgment, peculiarly fitted him to hold that wealthy and powerful See—that is to say, he would scruple at no corruption, would revolt at no infamy, to gain adherents “for the court against the nation;” and would make it the single aim of his life to maintain the English interest in Ireland; and this not only by careful distribution of the immense patronage of Government, but by still baser acts of seduction. Memoirs and satires of that time have made but too notorious the mysteries of his house near Dublin, where wine in profusion and be vies of beautiful harlots baited the trap to catch the light youth of the metropolis. Primate Stone was a very handsome man, of very dignified presence and demeanour; and with such a man for lord-justice and privy councillor, the Duke of Dorset was able to prevent any dangerous assertion of independence during his viceroyalty. There were, however, continual debates over the question of supplies, the rapidly increased expenses of the public establishments, and the notorious corruption practised by Government.

So long as the common interest of the Protestants was kept secure against the mass of the people, all was well; but during the Devonshire administration alarm was taken about that vital point, on account of a bill to reverse an attainder which Lord Clancarty had succeeded in having presented to the Irish Parliament during the preceding viceroyalty, and which there seemed to be some danger might be passed. The Clancarty estate, which would have been restored by this attainder, was valued at £60,000 *per annum*; and it was then in the hands of many new proprietors who had purchased under the confiscation titles, and who now, of course, besieged and threatened Parliament with their claims and outcries. It was also found that other persons, whose lands had been confiscated (unjustly as they said they were ready to prove), had instituted proceedings for the recovery of certain pieces of land or houses. In short, there were eighty-seven suits commenced; and the House felt that it was time to set at least that affair at rest. If Papists were to be allowed to disquiet Protestant possessors by alleging injustice and illegality in the proceedings by which they had been despoiled, it was clearly perceived that there would be an end of the Protestant interest, which, in fact, reposed upon injustice and illegality from the beginning. Therefore, a series of very violent resolutions was passed by the Commons, denouncing all these proceedings as a

disturbance of the public weal, and declaring all those who instituted any such suits, or acted in them as lawyer or attorney, to be public enemies. It may be remembered that not only were Catholic barristers debarred from practice, but, by a late act, Catholic solicitors too ; so that after these resolutions there could not be much chance of success in any lawsuit for a Catholic. Thus the Protestant interest was quieted for that time.

Meanwhile, war was raging over the Continent, and King George II., with his son, the Duke of Cumberland, had gone over to take command of the British and Hanoverian troops, operating on the French frontier, while Central Germany was fiercely debated between the Empress Queen, allied with England, and Frederick of Prussia, allied with France. The first considerable battle after the King took command was at Dettingen the 27th of June, 1743. This place is on the Mein or Mayn river, and very near the city of Frankfort. The French were commanded by the *Maréchal de Noailles* ; the allies by King George ostensibly, but really by the Earl of Stair. The day went against the French, and ended in almost a rout of their army, which would have become a total rout but for the exertions of the Count de Lally, then acting as *aide-major-general* to Noailles. The *Maréchal* himself gives him this very high testimony :—"He three several times rallied the army in its rout, and saved it in its retreat by his advice given to the council of war after the action."\* As this celebrated soldier will reappear in the narrative, and especially on one far greater and more terrible day, it may be well to give some account of him. His father was Sir Gerard Lally (properly O'Mullally), of Tullindal ; and had been one of the defenders of Limerick, and one of those who volunteered for France with Sarsfield. Sir Gerard became immediately an officer in the French service, and his son, the Count Lally, was born at Romans, in Dauphiné, when his father was there in garrison. He first mounted a trench at the siege of Barcelona, in Spain, when he was twelve years of age, but already a captain in Dillon's regiment. This was in 1714. We next hear of him planning a new descent upon some point of England or Scotland, in order to retrieve the fortunes of "the Pretender," and had actually a commission for this purpose from King James III. To conceal his plans, he announced that he was preparing to make a campaign as volunteer under his near relative *Maréchal de Lascy* (De Lacy), who then commanded the Russian army against the Turks. Cardinal Fleury induced him to lay aside every other design and

\* Letter of *Maréchal de Noailles*, quoted in *Biog. Univ.*, art. *Lally*.

to go to Russia, not in a military but in a civil capacity ; in short, as a diplomatist with special mission. As this mission was to endeavour to detach Russia from English alliance, and so weaken England in the war, he gladly accepted, for the great object of Lally's life, to the very last, was to strike a mortal blow at England in any part of the earth or sea. He did not succeed in his Russian embassy, and left St. Petersburg in a fit of impatience, for which the Cardinal rebuked him ; then served under Noailles in the Netherlands, who particularly requested him to act as the chief of his staff. It is thus we find him at the disastrous battle of Dettingen ; but for the repulse that day both Lally and the French were soon to have a choice revenge. After the battle, a regiment of Irish infantry was created for him, and attached to the Irish brigade. The brigade consisted now of seven regiments, and it saw much service that year and the next under the Count de Saxe, who took the various towns of Menin, Ypres, and Furnes, in the Netherlands, all which the Duke of Cumberland endeavoured to prevent without avail, and without coming to a battle.

In this year, 1744, however, great preparation was made on both sides for a decisive campaign. The French army was increased in the Netherlands, and on the other side the English court had at length prevailed on the States-General of Holland to join the alliance against France. In September of that year, the allies, then in camp at Spire, were reinforced by 20,000 Dutch, who were time enough, unluckily for them, to take a share in the great and crowning battle of Fontenoy.

It might be supposed that the incidents of this famous battle have been sufficiently discussed and described to make them generally known ; but, in fact, the plain truth of that affair (especially as it affects the Irish engaged) is very difficult to ascertain with precision, and for the very reason that there are so many accounts of it handed down to us by French, Irish, and English authorities, all with different national prejudices and predilections. Reading the usual English accounts of the battle, one is surprised to find in general no mention of Irishmen having been at Fontenoy at all ; the English naturally dislike to acknowledge that they owed that mortal disaster in great part to the Irish exiles whom the faithlessness and oppression of their own Government had driven from their homes and filled with the most intense passion of vengeance : the French, with a sentiment of national pride equally natural, wish to appropriate to French soldiers, as far as possible, the honour of one of their proudest victories ; but if we read certain enthusiastic Irish narratives of Fontenoy, we might be led suppose that it was the Irish brigade



alone which saved the French army and ruined the redoubtable column of English and Hanoverians. It is well, then, to endeavour to establish the simple facts by reference to such authorities as are beyond suspicion.

In the end of April, 1745, the Maréchal de Saxe, now famous for his successful sieges in the Netherlands, opened trenches before Tournay, on the Scheldt river, which, in this place, runs nearly from south to north. King Louis, with the young dauphin, "not to speak of mistresses, play-actors, and cookery-apparatus (in wagons innumerable) hastens to be there," says Carlyle.\* Tournay was very strongly fortified, and defended by a Dutch garrison of nine thousand men, and Saxe appeared before it with an army of about seventy thousand men. The allies determined at all hazards to raise the siege, and King George's son, the Duke of Cumberland, hastened over from England to take command of the allied forces—English Dutch, Hanoverian, and Austrian—destined for that service. Count Königseck commanded the Austrian quota, and the Prince of Waldeck the Dutch. The army was mustered near Brussels on the 4th of May, and thence set forth, sixty thousand strong, for Tournay, passing near the field of *Steinkirk*—a name remembered in the English army. On Sunday, the 9th of May (*new style*), the duke reached the village of Vazon, six or seven miles from Tournay, in a low, undulating country, with some wood and a few streams and peaceable villages. The ground which was to be the field of battle, lies all between the Brussels road and the river Scheldt. Tournay lay to the north-west, closely beleagured by the French, and the Maréchal de Saxe, aware of the approach of the allies, had thrown up some works, to bar their line of advance, with strong batteries in the villages of Antoine and Fontenoy, and on the edge of a small wood, called *Bois de Barri*, which spreads out towards the east, but narrows nearly to a point in the direction of Tournay. In these works, connected by redans and *abatis*, and mounted with probably a hundred guns, the Maréchal took his position with fifty-five thousand men, leaving part of his force around Tournay and in neighbouring garrisons. Near the point of the wood is a redoubt called "redoubt of Eu," so called from the title of the Norman regiment which occupied it that day. On a hill a little farther within the French lines the king and the dauphin took their post.

\* Life of Frederick. Mr. Carlyle, who devotes many pages to a minute account of the battle of Fontenoy, does not seem to have been made aware, in the course of his reading, of the presence of any Irish troops at all on that field.



And now Saxe only feared that the allies might not venture to assail him in so strong a place; and the old Austrian, Königseck, was strongly of opinion that the attempt ought not to be made; but the Duke of Cumberland and Waldeck, the Dutch commander, were of a different opinion, and, in short, it was determined to go in. Early in the morning of the 11th the dispositions were made. The Dutch and Austrians were on the enemy's left, opposite the French right, and destined to carry St. Antoine and its works; the English and Hanoverians in the centre, with their infantry in front and cavalry in the rear, close by the wood of Barri. The map contained in the "Memoirs of Maréchal Saxe" gives the disposition of the various corps on the French side; and we there find the place of the Irish brigade marked on the left of the French line, but not the extreme left, and nearly opposite the salient point of the wood of Barri. The brigade was not at its full strength; and we know not on what authority Mr. Davis\* states that all the seven regiments were on the ground. There were probably four regiments; certainly three—Clare's, Dillon's and Lally's—Lord Clare being in chief command. Neither Clare, nor Dillon, nor Lally, was Irish by birth, but all were sons of Limerick exiles. Of their troops ranked that day under the green flag, probably not one had fought at Limerick fifty-four years before. They were either the sons of the original "Wild-geese," or Irishmen who had migrated since, to fly from the degradation of the penal laws, and seek revenge upon their country's enemies. Judging from the space which the brigade is made to occupy on the map, it appears likely that its effective force at Fontenoy did not exceed five thousand men, or the tenth part of the French army.

The various attacks ordered by the Duke of Cumberland on the several parts of the French line were made in due form, after some preliminary cannonading. None of them succeeded. The Dutch and Austrians were to have stormed St. Antoine, their right wing at the same time joining hands with the English and Hanoverians opposite Fontenoy. But they found the fire from Antoine too heavy, and, besides, a battery they were not aware of opened upon them from the opposite bank of the Scheldt, and cut them up so effectually that after two gallant assaults they were fain to retire to their original position. Of course the English have complained ever since that it was the Dutch and Austrians who lost them Fontenoy. In the mean time the English and Hanoverians were furiously attacking the village of Fontenoy itself, but had no

\* Note to his splendid ballad of "Fontenoy."

better success. Before the attack a certain Brigadier-General Ingoldsby had been detached with a Highland regiment, "Semple's Highlanders," and some other force, to silence the redoubt of Eu, on the edge of the wood, which seriously incommoded the English right. Ingoldsby tried, but could not do it (on which account he underwent a court-martial in England afterwards). So the duke had to make his attack on Fontenoy with the guns of that redoubt hammering his right flank. The attack was made, however, and made with gallantry and persistency, three times, but completely repulsed each time with considerable loss. Nothing but repulse everywhere—right, left and centre; but now the Duke of Cumberland perceived that between Fontenoy and the wood of Barri, with its redoubt of Eu, there was a passage practicable, though with great peril and loss from the cross-fire. "Sire," said Saxe to the king on the evening of that triumphant day, "I have one fault to reproach myself with—I ought to have put one more redoubt between the wood and Fontenoy; but I thought there was no general bold enough to hazard a passage in that place."\* In fact, no general ought to have done so. However, as Carlyle describes this advance, "His Royal Highness blazes into resplendent *Platt-Deutsch* rage, what we may call spiritual white heat, a man *sans peur* at any rate, and pretty much *sans avis*—decides that he must and will be through those lines, if it please God; that he will not be repulsed at his part of the attack—not he, for one; but will plunge through by what gap there is (nine hundred yards, Voltaire measures it), between Fontenoy and that redoubt, with its laggard Ingoldsby, and see what the French interior is like."† In fact, he did come through the lines, and saw the interior.

He retired for a space, rearranged his English and Hanoverians in three thin columns, which, in the advance, under heavy fire from both sides, were gradually crowded into one column of great depth, full sixteen thousand strong.‡ They had with them twelve field-pieces—six in front and six in the middle of their lines.§ The column had to pass through a kind of hollow, where they were somewhat sheltered from the fire on each flank, dragging

\* Voltaire. Louis XV. His account of the battle is in general very clear and precise; but Voltaire, both in this work and in his poem of Fontenoy, though he cannot altogether avoid all mention of the Irish troops, takes care to say as little about them as possible.

† Life of Frederick.

‡ Davis, both in his ballad and his note on this battle, by some unaccountable oversight, states it at six thousand.

§ Voltaire.

their cannon by hand, and then mounted a rising ground, and found themselves nearly out of direct range from the guns both of Fontenoy and the redoubt of Eu—fairly in sight of the French position. In front of them, as it chanced, were four battalions of the *Gardes Françaises*, with two battalions of Swiss guards on their left, and two other French regiments on their right. The French officers seem to have been greatly surprised when they saw the English battery of cannon taking position on the summit of the rising ground. “English cannon!” they cried; “let us go and take them.” They mounted the hill with their grenadiers, but were astonished to find an army in their front. A heavy discharge, both of artillery and musketry, made them quickly recoil with heavy loss. The English column continued to advance steadily, and the French guards, with the regiment of Courten, supported by other troops, having re-formed, came up to meet them. It is at this point that the ceremonious salutes are said to have passed between Lord Charles Hay, who commanded the advance of the English, and the Comte d’Auteroche, an officer of the French grenadiers—the former taking off his hat and politely requesting Messieurs of the French guards to fire—the latter, also, with hat off, replying, “After you, Messieurs.” D’Espagnac and Voltaire both record this piece of stage-courtesy. But Carlyle, though he says it is a pity, disturbs the course of history by means of “a small irrefragable document which has come to him,” namely, an original letter from Lord Hay to his brother, of which this is an excerpt:—“It was our regiment that attacked the French guards; and when we came within twenty or thirty paces of them, I advanced before our regiment, drank to them (to the French), and told them that we were the English guards, and hoped they would stand till we came quite up to them, and not swim the Scheldt, as they did the Mayn at Dettingen; upon which I immediately turned about to our own regiment, speeched them, and made them huzzah. An officer (d’Auteroche) came out of the ranks, and tried to make his men huzzah. However, there were not above three or four in their brigade that did,” &c. In fact, it appears that the French, who, according to that chivalrous legend, “never fired first,” did fire first on this occasion; but both *Gardes Françaises* and Swiss guards were driven off the field with considerable slaughter. And still the English column advanced, with a terrible steadiness, pouring forth a tremendous fire of musketry and artillery, suffering grievously by repeated attacks, both in front and flank, but still closing up its gapped ranks, and showing a resolute face on both sides. There was some confusion in the French army,

owing to the surprise at this most audacious advance, and the resistance at first was unconcerted and desultory. Regiment after regiment, both foot and horse, was hurled against the redoubtable column, but all were repulsed by an admirably sustained fire, which the French called *feu d'enfer*. Voltaire states that among the forces which made these ineffectual attacks were certain Irish battalions, and that it was in this charge that the Colonel Count Dillon was killed. And still the formidable column steadily and slowly advanced, calmly loading and firing, "as if on parade," says Voltaire, and were now full three hundred paces beyond the line of fire from Fontenoy and the redoubt of the wood, resolutely marching on towards the French headquarters. By this time Count Saxe found that his batteries at Fontenoy had used all their balls and were only answering the guns of the enemy with discharges of powder. He believed the battle to be lost, and sent two several times to entreat the king to cross the Scheldt, and get out of danger, which the king, however, steadily refused to do.

Military critics have said that at this crisis of the battle, if the English had been supported by cavalry, and due force of artillery, to complete the disorder of the French—or, if the Dutch, under Waldeck, had at that moment resolutely repeated their assault upon St. Antoine, the victory was to the Duke of Cumberland, and the whole French army must have been flung into the Scheldt river. Count Saxe was now in mortal anxiety, and thought the battle really lost, when the Duke de Richelieu rode up at full gallop and suggested a plan, which was happily adopted. It was the thought of that same Colonel Count de Lally, who has been heard of before at Dettingen.\* In fact, this famous plan does not appear to have required any peculiar strategic genius to conceive, for it was neither more nor less than to open with a battery of cannon right in front of the advancing column, and then attack it simultaneously with all the reserves, including the king's household cavalry, and the Irish brigade, which still stood motionless near the western point of the wood of Barri, and now abreast of the English column on its right flank. There was also in the same quarter the French regiment of Normandie, and several other corps which had already been repulsed and broken in several ineffectual assaults on the impregnable column.† A

\* "It is said the Jacobite Irishman, Count Lally, of the Irish brigade, was prime author of this notion."—Carlyle. Frederick. This is the only indication in all Carlyle's laboured account of the battle that he was aware even of the presence of one Irishman.

† The Marquis d'Argenson, minister of Foreign Affairs, was present on



French authority \* informs us that "this last decisive charge was determined upon, in the very crisis of the day, in a conversation rapid and sharp as lightning, between Richelieu, galloping from rank to rank, and Lally, who was out of patience at the thought that the devoted ardour of the Irish brigade was not to be made use of." He had his wish, and at the moment when the battery opened on the front of the column, the brigade had orders to assail its right flank and to go in with the bayonet.

The English mass was now stationary, but still unshaken, and never doubting to finish the business, but looking wistfully back for the cavalry, and longing for the Dutch. Suddenly four guns opened at short range straight into the head of their column; and at the same moment the Irish regiments plunged into their right flank with bayonets levelled, and a hoarse roar that rose above all the din of battle. The words were in an unknown tongue; but if the English had understood it, they would have known that it meant "*Remember Limerick!*" That fierce charge broke the steady ranks, and made the vast column waver and reel. It was seconded by the regiment of Normandie with equal gallantry, while on the other flank the cavalry burst in impetuously, and the four guns in front were ploughing long lanes through the dense ranks. It was too much. The English resisted for a little with stubborn bravery, but at length tumbled into utter confusion, and fled from the field, leaving it covered thickly with their own dead, and their enemies'. They were not pursued far, for, once outside of the lines, their cavalry was enabled to cover their retreat. The allies lost 9,000 men, including 2,000 prisoners, and the French 5,000. So the battle of Fontenoy was fought and won.†

the battle, and immediately after wrote a narrative of it, which he addressed to M. de Voltaire, then "Historiographer to the King." He says: "A false *corps de reserve* was then brought up; it consisted of the same cavalry which had at first charged ineffectually, the household troops of the king, the carbineers of the French guards, who had not yet been engaged, and a body of Irish troops, which were excellent, especially when opposed to the English and Hanoverians."

\* Biog. Univ. Lally.

† M. de Voltaire, though he gives a long account of this battle, and cannot avoid naming at least the Irish brigade, has not one word of praise for it. This is the more notable, as he had D'Argenson's Memoir before him, who speaks of them as proving themselves excellent troops, *especially against the English*. But Voltaire always grudges any credit to the Irish troops, and never speaks of them at all in his histories when he can possibly avoid it. D'Argenson himself was well-known to be no friend of theirs, and would not have praised them on this occasion if their bravery had not attracted the notice of all. Indeed, in the same letter to Voltaire this courtier says

It cost the Irish brigade dear. The gallant Dillon was killed, with one-fourth of the officers, and one-third of the rank and file; but the immediate consequences to France were immense—Tournay at once surrendered; Ghent, Oudenarde, Bruges, Dendermonde, Ostend, were taken in quick succession; and the English and their allies driven back behind the swamps and canals of Holland.

None of all the French victories in that age caused in Paris such a tumult of joy and exultation. In England there were lamentation, and wrath, and courts-martial; but not against the Duke of Cumberland, for the king's son could do no wrong. In Ireland, as the news came in, first of the British defeat, and then, gradually, of the glorious achievements of the brigade, and the honours paid to Irish soldiers, a sudden but silent flush of triumph and of hope broke upon the oppressed race; and many a gloomy countenance brightened with a gleam of stern joy, in the thought that the long-mourned "Wild-geese" would one day return, with freedom and vengeance in the flash of the bayonets of Fontenoy.

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## CHAPTER XI.

1745—1753.

THE battle of Fontenoy was an event in the history of Ireland—not only by the reflected glory of Irish heroism, but because disaster to England was followed, as usual, by a relaxation of the atrocities inflicted upon Irish Catholics, under the Penal Code. England, indeed, was in profound alarm, and not without cause,

very emphatically—"The truth, the positive fact, without flattery, is this—the king gained the battle himself."

The services of the brigade, however, on that great day, were too notorious in the French army to be altogether concealed. The Memoir cited before from the *Biographie Universelle* says:—"It is notorious how much the Irish brigade contributed to the victory, by bursting, at the point of the bayonet, into the flank of the terrible English column, while Richelieu cannonaded it in front."

English historians scarce mention the brigade at all on this occasion; but Lord Mahon is a creditable exception. He says, Count Saxe "drew together the household troops, the whole reserve, and every other man that could be mustered; but foremost of all were the gallant exiles of the Irish brigade." Voltaire, however, speaking of the troops who charged on the right flank, takes care to say, "*Les Irlandais les secondent.*" But, perhaps, the best attestation to the services of the brigade, was the imprecation on the Penal Code wrung from King George when he was told of the events of that day, "Cursed be the laws which deprive *me* of such subjects!"

for, not only had the campaign in the Netherlands gone so decidedly against her, but almost immediately after, it became known that preparations were on foot in France for a new invasion, on behalf of Charles Edward, the "Young Pretender." The Prince was now twenty-five years of age. He had been wasting away his youth at Rome, where his father, James III., then resided. In 1742 he was recalled to France, and some hopes were held out of giving him an armed force of French, Scotch, and Irish, to assert his father's rights to the crown of England. For three years he had waited impatiently for his opportunity; but the times were then so busy that nobody thought of him. It was the Cardinal de Tencin who one day advised him to wait no longer, but go with a few friends to some point in the north of Scotland. "Your presence alone," said the Cardinal, "will create for you a party and an army; then France must send you succour." In short, the Prince consulted with a few of his friends, chiefly Irish officers; an armed vessel of eighteen guns was placed at his disposal by an Irish merchant of Nantes, named Walsh; a French ship-of-war was ordered to escort him; and on the 12th of June, just one month after Fontenoy, he set sail with only seven attendants upon his adventurous errand. The seven who accompanied him were the Marquis of Tullibardine, brother to the Duke of Athole, Sir Thomas Sheridan, Colonel O'Sullivan ("who was appointed," says Voltaire, "*Maréchal des Logis* of the army not yet in being"), a Scotch officer named MacDonald, an Irish officer named Kelly, and an English one named Strickland. They landed on the bare shore of Moidart, in the Highlands, where the Prince was quickly joined by some of the Jacobite clans, the MacDonald, Lochiel, Cameron, and Fraser. The Dukes of Argyle and Queensberry, however, who controlled other powerful clans, kept aloof, and prepared to take the part of the reigning king. King George was at this moment in Hanover; but the lords of his council of regency made the best arrangements possible for resistance in a country so nearly stripped of all its regular troops, and set a price upon the Prince's head.

In this emergency it was necessary to think of Ireland, as it was considered certain that the Prince must have had agents in that country to stir up its ancient Jacobite spirit; besides, it was known that the principal chiefs of the enterprise were officers of the Irish brigade, coming flushed from Fontenoy; and the Government thought it was not in the nature of things that there could be tranquility in Ireland. There must surely be an arrangement either for stirring an insurrection in the island itself or for sending fighting men to Scotland. On the whole, it was judged



needful, in this dangerous crisis of British affairs, to show some indulgence to the Irish, and, accordingly, in the month of September, just as Prince Charles Edward was leading his mountaineers into Edinburgh, an amiable viceroy was sent to Dublin, bearing what might be called a "message of peace to Ireland." This was the Earl of Chesterfield, who had a reputation for gallantry, accomplishments, and an easy disposition. What Lord Chesterfield's secret instructions were, we can only judge by the course of his administration. He at once put a stop to the business of priest-hunting, and allowed the Catholic Chapels in Dublin and elsewhere to be opened for service. On the 8th of October he met Parliament; and although in his speech on that occasion he recommended the Houses to turn their attention to the laws against Popery and consider whether they needed any amendment, yet this was expressed in a cold and rather equivocal manner, which greatly disgusted the fierce and gloomy bigots of the "Ascendency." He recommended no new penal laws, thinking probably there were quite enough already, and did not even introduce that traditional exhortation to the Houses—to exercise extreme vigilance in putting in force that Penal Code which they already had in such high perfection.

He soon made it evident, in short, that active persecution was to be suspended, although that indulgence was contrary to law; and those too zealous magistrates who had earned distinction by active prosecution of Papists under former viceroys found only discouragement and rebuke at the Castle. Chancellors, judges, and sheriffs were made to understand that if they would do the King's business aright this time, they must leave the "common enemy" in peace for the present. But Lord Chesterfield, immediately on coming over, employed many confidential agents, or, in short, spies, to find out what the Catholics were doing, thinking of, and talking about—whether there were any secret meetings—above all, whether there was any apparent diminution in the numbers of young men at fairs and other gatherings; in short, whether there was any migration to Scotland, or any uneasy movement of the people, as if in expectation of something coming.\* Nothing of all this did he find, and, in truth, nothing of the

\* Plowden. This worthy writer, as well as his predecessor, Dr. Curry, is very emphatic in establishing the "loyal" attitude of the Irish people upon this occasion. Dr. Curry takes pains to prove "that no Irish Catholic, lay or clerical, was any way engaged in the Scottish rebellion of 1715." It is probable that Sheridan, O'Sullivan, Kelly, and other French-Irish officers, who fought in Scotland, were Frenchmen by birth, like Lally, Dillon, and Clare.



kind existed. The people were perfectly tranquil, not much seeming even to know or to care what was going on in Scotland, enjoying quietly their unwonted exemption from the actual lash of the penal laws, and even repairing to holy wells again without fear of fine and whipping. It is true the lash was still held over them, and they were soon to feel it; true, also, that they were still excluded from all rights and franchises as strictly as ever. Not one penal law was repealed or altered; but there was at least forbearance towards their worship and their clergy. They might see a venerable priest now walking, in daylight, even from his "registered" parish into another, to perform some rite or service of religion, without fear of informers, of handcuffs, and of transportation. Nay, bishops and vicars apostolic could venture to cross the sea, and ordain priests and confirm children, in a quiet way; and it was believed that not even a monk could frighten Lord Chesterfield, who, in fact, had lived for years in France, and respected a monk quite as much as a Rector of the Establishment.

Having once satisfied himself that there was no insurrectionary movement in the country, and none likely to be, he was not to be moved from his tolerant course by any complaints or remonstrances. Far from yielding to the feigned alarm of those who solicited him to raise new regiments, he sent four battalions of the soldiers then in Ireland to reinforce the Duke of Cumberland. He discouraged jobs, kept down expenses, took his pleasure, and made himself exceedingly popular in his intercourse with Dublin society; and not having forgotten the precepts which he had given to his son, the old beau (he was now fifty-two) pretended, from habit, to be making love to the wives of men of all parties. When some savage Ascendency Protestant would come to him with tales of alarm, he usually turned the conversation into a tone of light badinage, which perplexed and baffled the man. One came to seriously put his lordship on his guard by acquainting him with the fact that his own coachman was in the habit of going to Mass. "Is it possible?" cried Chesterfield; "then I will take care the fellow shall not drive *me* there." A courtier burst into his apartment one morning, while he was sipping his chocolate in bed, with the startling intelligence that "the Papists were rising" in Connaught. "Ah!" he said, looking at his watch, "'tis nine o'clock; time for them to rise." There was evidently no dealing with such a Viceroy as this, who showed such insensibility to the perils of Protestantism and the evil designs of the dangerous Papists. Indeed, he was seen to distinguish by his peculiar admiration a Papist beauty, Miss Ambrose,

whom he declared to be the only "dangerous Papist" he had met in Ireland.

It was during this period of quietude and comparative relief that the excellent Bishop Berkeley, of Cloyne, wrote a pamphlet in the form of an address to the Roman Catholics of his Diocese of Cloyne. He had evidently feared that the Irish Catholics were secretly engaged in a conspiracy to make an insurrection in aid of the Pretender; and writes in a kind and paternal manner, exhorting them to keep the peace and attend quietly to their own industry, though, indeed, the Bishop is evidently at a loss for arguments which he can urge upon this proscribed, disfranchised race, why they *should* take their lot quietly and be loyal to a Government that does not recognize their existence.

In the meanwhile, Prince Charles Edward, with his Highlanders, had won the battle of Prestonpans, near Edinburgh (2nd of October), and a few days after that victory arrived a French and a Spanish ship, bringing money and a supply of Irish officers, who, having served in France and Spain, were capable of disciplining his rude troops.\* He marched south-westward, took and garrisoned Carlisle, advanced through Lancashire, where a body of three hundred English joined his standard, and thence as far as Derby, within thirty leagues of London. Report, which exaggerates every thing, represented his army as amounting to thirty thousand men, and all Lancashire as having declared in his favour. The *Habeas Corpus* Act was suspended; the shops were closed for a day or two; and Dutch and Hessian troops were brought over in a great hurry from the Continent. The Franco-Irish soldiers in the service of France now became violently excited and impatient. They imagined that a descent upon England, in the neighbourhood of Plymouth, would be quite practicable, as the passage is so short from Calais or Boulogne. The plan was to cross by night with ten thousand men and some cannon. Once disembarked, a great part of England would rise to join them, and they could easily form a junction with the Prince, probably near London. The officers, of whom the most active in this business was Lally, demanded, as leader of the expedition, the Duke de Richelieu, who had fought with them at Fontenoy. They urged their point so earnestly that at length permission was granted. But the expedition never took place on any thing like the scale on which it was projected. M. de Voltaire, in describing the preparations, for once departs from his usual rule so far as to praise an Irishman. He says:—"Lally, who has since then

\* Voltaire.

been a lieutenant-general, and who died so tragic a death, was the soul of the enterprise. The writer of this history, who long worked along with him, can affirm that he has never seen a man more full of zeal, and that there needed nothing to the enterprize but possibility. It was impossible to go to sea in face of the English squadrons ; and the attempt was regarded in London as absurd.”\*

In fact, only a handful of troops was actually sent ; and those troops were not Irish, but Scotch. Lord Drummond, brother of the Duke of Perth, an officer in the French service, set forth in one vessel, by way of the German Sea, and arrived safely at Montrose, with three companies of the *Royal Ecossais*, a Scottish regiment in French service. But before this small reinforcement arrived, the army of the Prince had already retired from the centre of England ; it had been diminished and weakened by various causes, the principal of which were jealousies of Highland chiefs against one another, and of Lowland lairds against them all, together with a general lack of discipline, and, ere long, a lack of provisions also. The Jacobite force made the best of its way back to Scotland, and soon after (January 28, 1746), utterly defeated an English force at Falkirk. This was the last of its successes. The Duke of Cumberland was now marching into Scotland with a considerable army, and arrived in Edinburgh on the 10th of February. Prince Charles Edward was obliged to raise the siege of Stirling Castle. The winter was severe, and subsistence was scarce. His last resource was now in the Northern Highlands, where there was still a force on foot, watching the seaports to receive the supplies which might still be sent from France ; but most of the vessels destined to that service were captured by English cruisers. Three companies of the Irish regiment of Fitzjames arrived safely, and were received by the Highlanders with acclamations of joy—the women running down to meet them and leading the officers’ horses by the bridles. Still the Prince was now hard pressed by the English ; he retired to Inverness, which he made his head-quarters ; and on the 23rd of April he learned that the Duke, steadily advancing through the

\* Any attempt of any kind is always regarded in London as absurd ; and Voltaire was always too ready to adopt the view of English affairs which the English chose to give. He never wished for the success of the Stuarts ; considered the House of Hanover a blessing to England, and did not care for Ireland at all. The reasons why he disliked the Irish were, first, that they were good Catholics ; and, next, that the Irish in France were not very modest in asserting their pretensions and demanding recognition of their services. It was Voltaire’s correspondent, D’Argenson, when minister, that said once to King Louis, “Those Irish troops give more trouble than all the rest of your Majesty’s army.” “My enemies say so,” answered the King.



mountains, had crossed the river Spay, and felt that a decisive battle was now imminent. On the 27th the two armies were in presence at Culloden—the Prince with 5,000 men or less, the Duke with 10,000, well supplied with both cavalry and artillery. The English were by this time accustomed to the Highland manner of fighting, which had so intimidated them at first, and with such superiority of numbers and equipments the event could scarcely be doubtful. The Prince's small army was totally defeated, with a loss of 900 killed, and 320 prisoners. The Prince himself made his way into the mountains, accompanied by his faithful friends, Sheridan and O'Sullivan; and his adventures, concealments, and ultimate escape are sufficiently well-known. This was the last struggle of the Stuarts, and their cause was now lost utterly and for ever. There were still, from time to time, plots, and even attempts by the Scottish Jacobites to make at least some commencement of a new insurrection, but all in vain. Ever after Jacobitism existed only in songs and toasts, sung and pledged in private society; and many a house in Edinburgh and glen in the Highlands is yet made to ring with those plaintive or warlike lyrics. So long as the Prince lived, the health of Prince Charlie was often drunk, or, "The King over the Water;" but he died in Florence in 1788, without legitimate posterity, and the cause of the ancient family sank definitively into the domain of sentimental associations and romantic souvenirs.

Almost at the very moment of the battle of Culloden the conciliatory Earl of Chesterfield was recalled from Ireland. His work was done, and done well. "England," says Plowden, with more than his usual point and force, "England was out of danger, and Ireland could securely be put again under its former *régime*." After a short interregnum, under three lords-justices, the Earl of Harrington was appointed Lord Lieutenant on the 13th of September.

There was certainly no excuse for bringing the Irish back under the unmitigated terrors of the penal laws, on account of any manifestation of turbulence, or of a design "to bring in the Pretender" during the last insurrection. On this point the most hostile authorities agree, and, although we do not take credit for the fact as a proof of "loyalty" to the House of Hanover, the fact itself is indisputable. One remarkable witness is worth hearing on this question. In the year 1762, upon a debate in the House of Lords about the expediency of raising five regiments of these Catholics, for the service of the King of Portugal, Doctor Stone (then Primate), in answer to some commonplace



objections against the good faith and loyalty of these people, which were revived with virulence on that occasion, declared publicly, in the House of Lords, that "in the year 1747, after that rebellion was entirely suppressed, happening to be in England, he had an opportunity of perusing all the papers of the rebels, and their correspondents, which were seized in the custody of Murray, the Pretender's secretary; and that, after having spent much time and taken great pains in examining them (not without some share of the then common suspicion, that there might be some private understanding and intercourse between them and the Irish Catholics), he could not discover the least trace, hint, or intimation of such intercourse or correspondence in them; or of any of the latter's favouring, abetting, or having been so much as made acquainted with the designs or proceedings of these rebels. And what," he said, "he wondered at most of all was, that in all his researches, he had not met with any passage in any of these papers, from which he could infer that either their Holy Father the Pope, or any of his cardinals, bishops, or other dignitaries of that church, or any of the Irish clergy, had, either directly or indirectly, encouraged, aided, or approved of, the commencing or carrying on of that rebellion."

Another, and still more singular attestation to the same fact is in Chief-Justice Marlay's Address to the Dublin Grand Jury, after the suppression of the Scottish insurrection. "When posterity read . . . that Ireland, where much the greatest part of the inhabitants profess a religion which sometimes has authorized, or at least justified rebellion, not only preserved peace at home, but contributed to restore it amongst his subjects of Great Britain, will they not believe that the people of Ireland were actuated by something more than their duty and allegiance? Will they not be convinced that they were animated by a generous sense of gratitude and zeal for their great benefactor, and fully sensible of the happiness of being blessed by living under the protection of a monarch, who, like the glorious King William," &c. Thus, if Irish Catholics of the present day are willing to plume themselves, as some Catholic writers have done, upon the unshaken loyalty of their ancestors in 1745, there is no doubt that they are fully entitled to all the credit which can come to them from that circumstance.

Under Lord Harrington's administration the debates on money bills formed the chief subject of public interest, and the only field on which Irish "Patriotism" and the champions of English domination tried their strength. It was also becoming a matter more and more important to the English Government, because,

notwithstanding the discouragements of trade and the distresses of the country people, Ireland had now a surplus revenue to dispose of, and the "Patriots" naturally supposed this to be fairly applicable to public works within the island. Primate Stone, however, who was now in possession of all the influence of Boulter, and imbued with the same thoroughly British principles, contended that all the surplus revenue of Ireland, as a dependent kingdom, belonged of right to the Crown. The "Patriot" party were led chiefly by two men—Henry Boyle, the Speaker of the House, and the Prime Sergeant Antony Malone—the former an ambitious and intriguing politician, the latter an eloquent debater and most able constitutional lawyer. Outside of the House the patriotic spirit of the people—that is the Protestant people—was inflamed by the writings of Dr. Charles Lucas, who had now, from petty corporation politics, risen to the height of the great argument of national independence. But it soon appeared that the Irish House of Commons was not yet prepared for the reception of such bold doctrines. Lucas and his writings were made the subject of a resolution in the House of Commons; he was but faintly defended by his own partisans, and the resolution passed, declaring him as "an enemy to his country," even for asserting the rightful independence of that very Parliament which proscribed him. This event befell in 1749; a reward was offered for the apprehension of Lucas, and he fled from the kingdom. As usual in such cases, the persecution directed against him attracted more attention to his writings and bred more sympathy with his principles; so that when he returned a few years after, he became for a time the most popular man in the kingdom. To international questions thus narrowed down to the mere right of voting or withholding money, it was impossible to give any high constitutional interest, and, in fact, during this administration not a single step in advance was gained by the "Patriot" party. The struggle for power and influence between Primate Stone and Speaker Boyle "was no more," says MacNevin, "than the struggle of two ambitious and powerful men for their own ends."

In 1751, Lord Harrington was recalled. The Duke of Dorset, for the second time came to Ireland as Lord Lieutenant, and the question of Irish Parliamentary control over the revenues of the country came at last to a crisis, and received a solution very little to the comfort of the "Patriots." In the last session under Harrington's viceroyalty, as there was a considerable surplus in the Irish Exchequer, the House of Commons determined to apply it

towards the discharge of the national debt. A bill had been accordingly prepared and transmitted to England with this view, to which was affixed the preamble :—"Whereas, on the 25th of March last, a considerable balance remained in the hands of the vice-treasurers or receivers-general of the kingdom, or their deputy or deputies, unapplied ; and it will be for your Majesty's service, and for the ease of your faithful subjects in this kingdom, that so much thereof as can be conveniently spared should be paid, agreeably to your Majesty's most gracious intention, in discharge of part of the national debt," &c. On the transmission of this bill to London, (Mr. Pelham being then Prime Minister), it was urged by the warm partisans of prerogative in the council, that the Commons of Ireland had no right to apply any part of the unappropriated revenue, nor even to take into consideration the propriety of such appropriation, without the previous consent of the Crown formally declared. When the Duke of Dorset came over, and opened the session of 1751, he informed the two Houses that he was commanded by the king to acquaint them that his Majesty, ever thoughtful of the welfare and happiness of his subjects, would graciously *consent*, and recommend it to them that such part of the money then remaining in his treasury, as should be thought consistent with the public service, be applied towards the further reduction of the national debt. "Consent" involved a principle, and the Commons took fire at the word. They framed the bill, appropriating £120,000 for the purpose already stated, and omitted in its preamble all mention of the consent. But ministers returned it with an alteration in the preamble, signifying the consent and containing the indispensable word. And the House, unwilling to drive the matter to extremities, passed the bill without further notice. Thus was established a precedent for the King of England consenting to the Irish Parliament voting their own money. So far had the differences proceeded, when Mr. Pelham died, and the Duke of Newcastle, who succeeded him as Prime Minister, zealous to uphold the prerogative, to improve upon the precedent, and to repeat the lesson just given to the aspiring colonists of Ireland, sent positive directions to Dorset, in opening the Session of 1753, to repeat the expression of his Majesty's gracious consent in mentioning the application of surplus revenue. The House, in their address, not only again omitted all reference to that gracious consent, but even the former expressions of grateful acknowledgment ; and the bill of supplies was actually transmitted to England without the usual complimentary preamble. The ministers of the crown in England, in their great wisdom, thought fit to supply it thus :—"And your



Majesty, ever attentive to the ease and happiness of your faithful subjects, has been graciously pleased to signify that you would *consent*," and so forth.

When the bill came over thus amended there was much excitement both in Parliament and in society. Malone was learned and convincing. Boyle, by his extensive influence and connections in Parliament, powerfully seconded, or rather led, the opposition. And notwithstanding the utmost exertions of the "king's servants" to do the king's business, the spirit of independence was sufficiently roused to cause the entire defeat of the amended bill, though only by a majority of five votes. The Commons wished to appropriate the money—the king consented, and insisted upon consenting; and then the Commons would not appropriate it at all, because the king consented. The defeat of the bill was considered as a victory of Patriotism, and was celebrated with universal rejoicings—even the Catholics joining in the general joy, for they felt instinctively that it was the weight of English predominance which kept them in their degraded position, and necessarily sympathized with every struggle against that. Yet, after all, this spirited conduct of the Commons was but an impotent protest; for the public service was now left wholly unprovided for, the circulation of money almost ceased, trade and business suffered, and a clamour soon arose, not more against the Government than against the "Patriots." Thus the Court party had its revenge. The Lord Lieutenant took the whole surplus revenue out of the treasury by virtue of a "royal letter;" so the king, after all, not only consented to the act, but did the act wholly himself: and Speaker Boyle was removed from his seat at the Privy Council, and Malone's patent of precedence as prime serjeant, was annulled. The Viceroy and the Primate took care to put some mark of royal displeasure upon every one who had voted down the Supply Bill; and it may be doubted whether the English interest did not gain a more decisive victory by thus trampling with impunity upon all constitutional forms, than if the Irish Parliament had quietly submitted to the servile form prescribed to it. There was no visible remedy; the mob of Dublin might hoot the Viceroy when his coach appeared in the streets; they could threaten and mob the Primate or Hutchinson, or others who were conspicuous in asserting the obnoxious royal prerogative; yet they had no alternative but to submit. In the discussion of this question we might repeat the words of Swift when speaking of the case of Molyneux:—"The love and torrent of power prevailed. Indeed, the arguments on *both* sides were invincible. For, in reason, all government without the consent of



the governed is the very definition of slavery ; but, in fact, eleven men well armed will certainly subdue one single man in his shirt."

Up to this period we have invariably found the struggles of the colony to take rank as a nation—of its Parliament to assert its independence—successfully resisted, and triumphantly crushed down. The assertion of the jurisdiction of the Irish lords in the case of "Sherlock and Annesley," was instantly followed by the Declaratory Act, which enacted that the Irish lords had no jurisdiction at all. The more anxiously our Irish Parliament affirmed its sovereign right, the more systematically were acts passed by the English Parliament to bind Ireland. And now the attempted vindication by the Irish Legislature of its right to vote, or not vote, its own money, was only the occasion of a high-handed royal outrage, trampling upon every pretence of constitutional law ; and Irish "Patriots," if unanswerable in their arguments, were impotent to make them good in fact ; for "the arguments on *both* sides were invincible." It is, in truth, impossible to avoid assent to the conclusions of Lord Clare (not O'Brien, King James's Lord Clare, but Fitzgibbon, King Georges' Lord Clare), in his often-quoted speech fifty years later, in so far as he demonstrated the anomalous and untenable relation between the two Parliaments of England and of Ireland. This English Protestant colony in Ireland, which aspired to be a nation, amounted to something under half a million of souls in 1754.\* It was out of the question that it should be united on a footing of equality with its potent mother country, by "the golden link of the crown," because the wearer of that crown was sure to be guided in his policy by English ministers, in accordance with English interests ; and as the army was the king's army, he could always enforce that policy. The fatal weakness of the colony was, that it would not amalgamate with the mass of the Irish people, so as to form a true nation, but set up the vain pretension to hold down a whole disfranchised people with one hand, and defy all England with the other.

Still the colonists were multiplying and growing rich ; and happily for them, England was on the eve of disaster and humiliation ; and a quarter of a century later a gracious opportunity was to arise, which gave them real independence for at least a few years.

\* We take the estimate of the entire population for that year from the tables in *Thom's Official Almanack and Directory*. For 1754, it is estimated at 2,372,634 men, women, and children. At the rate of five Catholics to one Protestant (which is Dr. Boulter's estimate), the *active* part of the population was under half a million. The rest was assumed by law not to exist in the world.

## CHAPTER XII.

1753—1760.

AFTER these high handed measures of the English ministry, of which Dorset was but the instrument, he became intolerable to the people of Dublin, as well as his son, Lord George Sackville, the Primate, and every one professing "to do the king's business in Ireland." The duke, even before being recalled, found it necessary to go over to England, partly to avoid the odium of the Irish, but chiefly to take care of his interests and those of his family at the court. The colonial patriotism ran high; the mob of Dublin became "Lucasian." The Primate durst not appear on the streets; and the manner was then first introduced of expressing, by toasts, at private supper parties, some stirring patriotic sentiment or keen invective against the administration, in terse language, which would pass from mouth to mouth, and thence get into the newspapers. One of these toasts was, "May all Secretary-Bashaws and lordly high priests be kept to their tackle, the sword and the Bible." Another was, "May the importation of *Ganymedes* into Ireland be discontinued," which was an allusion to unnamable vices attributed to Primate Stone.

However, the chief interest of the struggle between court and country was now, for the moment, transferred to the cabinets and ante-chambers of ministers at London. The Earl of Kildare, afterwards Duke of Leinster, a high-spirited nobleman, as became his Geraldine blood, was moved with indignation at the late proceedings in his country; for the Geraldines had always considered themselves Irish, and long before these Cromwellian and Williamite colonists had appeared in the island, his ancestors were not only Irish and chiefs of Clan-Geralt, but were even reproached as being actually more Irish than the Irish. Of course, the family had long ago "conformed," like most of the O'Briens and De Burghos, and many other ancient tribes of French and Irish stock; otherwise the Earl could not have sat in Parliament, nor taken the bold step which so much astonished British courtiers at this period. He went over to London, had an audience of the King, and presented with his own hand an address of remonstrance from himself against the whole course of the Irish Government under Lord Dorset. This document spoke very plainly to the King; told him "his loyal kingdom of Ireland wore a face of discontent;" that this discontent proceeded not from faction, but from the malfeasance of ministers; it complained of the odious duumvirate of the Primate and the

Viceroy; compared the latter with Strafford, the former with Laud and Wolsey, and especially exposed the insolent behaviour of Dorset's son, Lord George Sackville, in mischievously meddling with all the public affairs of the kingdom.

Ministers were surprised at what they considered the boldness of this proceeding. The Earl of Holderness writes to the Irish Chancellor Jocelyn, "My good Lord Chancellor—I am not a little concerned that the noble Earl of Kildare should take so bold a step as he may repent hereafter. . . . He was but ill received, and very coolly dismissed, as, indeed, the presumption well merited; for why should his Majesty receive any remonstrances concerning his kingdom or government, but from the proper ministers, or through the usual channels, namely, both Houses of Parliament? I desire my compliments may attend his grace, my Lord Primate, and wish him success in all laudable endeavours for *poor Ireland*." But, in fact, although the Earl's address was spoken of generally as an act of temerity "which nothing but the extreme mildness of Government could allow to remain unpunished," yet it appears he felt extremely easy about these hints of danger to himself. If it be true that he was "coolly dismissed" from the royal audience, yet the Government of Ireland was very quickly modelled upon his views, or almost placed substantially in his hands. Dorset was soon recalled, and was succeeded by the Lord Hartington, a personal and political ally of Kildare. Mr. Plowden alleges, and the result seems to confirm it, that this Viceroy came over to Ireland leagued by a secret treaty with the "Patriot" party, through the intermediation of Lord Kildare, and in especial had a clear understanding with Boyle and Malone. Stone was removed from the privy council; Boyle was made Earl of Shannon, and entered the Upper House, accepting at the same time a pension of £2,000 for thirty-one years. Ponsonby was elected Speaker in his place. The system of the English Court was now to buy up the "Patriots" with place and patronage. Even Malone was promised the succession to Boyle as Chancellor of the Exchequer; but the public, and his own respectable family, raised such an outcry against this that he was ashamed to accept it, and declined. Boyle continued nominal chancellor, and Malone condescended to receive the profits of the place. We hear but little more of any trouble given to English rule by this band of "Irish Patriots," and the bitter reflection of Thomas MacNevin upon the whole transaction seems well justified. "Despotism, without corruption, was not considered as a fit exemplar of Government, and the matter for the present terminated by a title and a pension conferred on the



greatest Patriot of the day. Henry Boyle bore about the blushing honours of his public virtue, emblazoned on the coronet of the Earl of Shannon. The Primate did not fare so well; he was removed from the Privy Council. The rest of the 'Patriots' found comfortable retreats in various lucrative offices, and the most substantial compliments were paid to those who were noisiest in in their patriotism and fiercest in their opposition."

In 1756 the Lord Lieutenant, now Duke of Devonshire, after having thus gratified the "Patriots," returned to England in delicate health—leaving as lords-justices, Jocelyn, Lord Chancellor, and the Earls of Kildare and Bessborough.

It is painful to be obliged to admit that the transference of the power and patronage of the Irish Government into the hands of the "Patriots" was not productive of any wholesome effect whatsoever—neither in favour of the Catholic masses (for the "Patriots" were their mortal enemies), nor in favour of public virtue and morality, for nobody demands to be bought at so high a price as a patriot. Accordingly, we soon find the whole attention of Parliament and of the country absorbed by inquiries into the enormously increased pension list upon the Irish Establishment. In March, 1756, some member (unpensioned) of the Commons, introduced a bill to vacate the seats of such members of the House of Commons as should accept any pension or civil office of profit from the Crown. It was voted down by a vote of eighty-five to fifty-nine—a fatal and ominous warning to the nation. On the day when that measure was debated, a return of pensions was brought in and read. Many of the first names in Ireland appear upon the shameful list; many foreigners or Englishmen; few or no meritorious servants of the State. The Countess of Yarmouth stood upon that return for £4,000; Mr. Bellingham Boyle, a near relative of the illustrious "Patriot," for £800 "during pleasure" (that is, so long as he should make himself generally useful), and the Patriot himself, now Earl of Shannon, closed up the list with his pension of £2,000 a-year.

Although the bill to vacate the seats of pensioners was lost, the revelations of prevailing corruption were so gross that certain other members of Parliament, not yet pensioned, again returned to the charge upon this popular grievance. A series of resolutions was, in fact, reported by the committee on public accounts, not, indeed, making personal and ungracious reference to the private concerns of Members of Parliament, but stating in general terms that the pension list had become altogether too enormous; that it had been increased since the 23rd of March, 1755—that is, within one year—by no less than £28,103 *per annum*; that



these pensions were lavished upon *foreigners*, and upon people not resident in Ireland; and that all this was a loss and injury to the nation and to his Majesty's service. Upon these resolutions, which did not touch too closely the "Patriots'" own private arrangements, there was a patriotic struggle, and even a patriotic triumph. The resolutions were passed, and were presented by Speaker Ponsonby to the Viceroy, with the usual request that they should be transmitted to the King. He only replied that the matter was of too high a nature for him to promise at once that he would forward such resolutions. Thereupon the Speaker returned to the House and reported his reception. It was determined to make a stand, and next day a motion was made that all orders not yet proceeded on should be adjourned, the House not having yet received any answer from the Lord Lieutenant as to the transmission of their resolutions. This, of course, meant that they would vote no supplies until they should be satisfied on that point. The motion to adjourn every thing was carried, by a strict party vote—those in favour of the resolutions voting for the adjournment, and those opposed to them voting against it. The Lord Lieutenant immediately sent a message that he would transmit the resolutions without delay. Thus a small patriotic victory was gained without any one being injured, for nothing whatsoever came of these resolutions.

In September, 1757, the Duke of Bedford came over as Lord Lieutenant—specially instructed by Mr. Pitt to go upon the conciliatory policy. He was to employ all softening and healing arts of government. In fact, it is to the Duke of Bedford's administration we are to go back for the commencement of that well-known Whig policy, of making use of the Patriotic Irish party, and even of the Catholics themselves, in support of the Whig party in England. There had been lately a considerable aggravation of the sufferings of the Catholics under the penal laws; the gentleness and forbearance exercised towards them during Chesterfield's viceroyalty had no longer a sufficient reason and motive; the halcyon days of connivance and extra-legal toleration were over, and the Catholics were once more under the full pressure of the laws "for preventing the growth of Popery."

A remarkable example of this low condition of the Catholics occurred the year following. A young Catholic girl named O'Toole was importuned by some of her friends to conform to the Established Church; to avoid this persecution, she took refuge in the house of another friend and relative, a Catholic merchant in Dublin, named Saul. Legal proceedings were at

once taken against Mr. Saul, in the name of a Protestant connection of the young lady. Of course, the trial went against Saul ; and on this occasion he was assured from the bench that Papists had no rights, inasmuch as "the law did not presume a Papist to exist in the kingdom ; *nor could they so much as breathe there without the connivance of Government.*" And the court was right, for such was actually the "Law," or what passed for law in Ireland at that time.

On the arrival of the Duke of Bedford there had even been prepared, by some Members of Parliament, the "heads of a bill" for a new and more stringent penal law regulating the registration of priests, and intended to put an effectual end, by dreadful penalties, to the regular course of hierarchical church government, which had, up to that time, been carried on regularly, though clandestinely and against the law. The menace of this new law and the late proceedings respecting Mr. Saul, caused a good deal of agitation and excitement among the Catholics, and the leading people of that religion in Dublin even ventured to hold small meetings in an obscure manner, to consult on the best way of meeting the fresh atrocities which were now threatened. In these preliminary meetings two factions at once developed themselves ; the long period of unacquaintance with all political and civil life had rendered the Catholic people almost incapable of efficient organization and co-operation ; and so they divided forthwith into two parties—the one led by Lord Trimbleston, the other by Dr. Fitzsimon. At length certain of the more rational and moderate leaders of the Catholics, Charles O'Connor, of Belanagar ; Dr. Curry, author of the *Historical Review of the Civil Wars* ; Mr. Wise, a Waterford merchant, together with Lords Fingal, Taaffe, and Delvin, originated a new movement by a meeting in Dublin, which established the first "Catholic Committee," and commenced that career of "agitation" which has since been carried to such great lengths. The first performances of this Catholic Committee have been, and will always be, very variously appreciated by Irishmen, in accordance with their different ideas as to the policy and duty of a nation held in so degrading a bondage. It became known, during the administration of Lord Bedford, that the Jacobites in France were preparing another expedition for a descent somewhere on the British coast, or Ireland ; and on the 29th of October, 1759, the Lord Lieutenant delivered a message to Parliament, in which he stated that he had received a letter from Mr. Secretary Pitt, written by the king's express command, informing him that France was preparing a new invasion and desiring him to exhort

the Irish people to show on this occasion their tried loyalty and attachment to the House of Hanover. Immediately an address, testifying the most devoted "loyalty" was prepared by the Catholic Committee. It was written by Charles O'Connor, and signed by 300 of the most respectable Catholic inhabitants of Dublin. But here a difficulty arose ; Catholics were not citizens, nor subjects ; they were not supposed to exist at all ; other attempts they had made to testify their "loyalty" had been repulsed with the most insolent disdain ; and they knew well they were exposing themselves to another humiliation of the same kind on the present occasion. However, two bold Papists undertook to present the address to Ponsonby, Speaker of the House of Commons. These were Antony McDermott and John Crump. They waited on the Speaker and read him the loyal manifesto. Mr. Ponsonby, a Whig and a "Patriot," took the document, laid it on the table, said not one word, and bowed the delegates out. There were a few days of agitated suspense ; and then on the 10th of December, the Lord Lieutenant sent a gracious answer. He did more ; he caused his answer to be printed in the *Dublin Gazette*, thereby officially recognizing the existence (though humble) of persons calling themselves Catholics in Ireland. The Speaker then sent for the two gentlemen who had presented the address, and ordered Mr. McDermott to read it to the House. Mr. McDermott read it, and then thanked the Speaker, in the name of the Irish Catholics, for his condescension. Mr. Ponsonby most graciously replied "that he counted it a favour to be put in the way of serving so respectable a body as the gentlemen who had signed that address." The Catholics then, for the first time since the Treaty of Limerick, were publicly and officially admitted to be in a species of existence. Here was a triumph !

In fact, this recognition of Irish Catholics as a part of the King of England's subjects was a kind of admission of that body over the threshold of the temple of civil and constitutional freedom. We may feel indignant at the extreme humility of the proceedings of the committee, and lament that the low condition of our countrymen at that time left them no alternative but that of professing a hypocritical "loyalty" to their oppressors ; for the only other alternative was secret organization to prepare an insurrection for the total extirpation of the English colony in Ireland, and, carefully disarmed as the Catholics were, they doubtless felt this to be an impossible project. Yet, for the honour of human nature, it is necessary to state the fact that this profession of loyalty to a King of England was in reality, insincere. Hypocrisy in such a case, is less disgraceful than would have been



a genuine canine attachment to the hand that smote, and to the foot that kicked.

The real object of the conciliatory policy which the Duke of Bedford was instructed to pursue towards the Catholics, was not only to give additional strength to the Whig party in England, but also to prepare the way for a legislative union between the two countries; in other words, a complete absorption and extinguishment of the shadowy nationality of Ireland in the more real and potent nationality of her "sister country," and even so early as the time of Bedford's administration, the English ministry had begun to count upon the Catholics as an *anti-Irish* element which might be used to crush the rising aspirations of colonial nationality. Rumours began to be current in Dublin, that a project was on foot to destroy the Irish Parliament, and effect a union with Great Britain, similar to that which had been made with Scotland; and the people of the metropolis became violently excited. On the 3rd of December, in this year (1759), the mob rose and surrounded the Houses of Parliament with loud outcries. When any member was seen arriving, they stopped him, and obliged him to swear that he would oppose a union. The Lord Chancellor and some of the bishops were hustled and maltreated, and one member of the Privy Council was flung into the Liffey. The tumult became so dangerous that at length Mr. Speaker Ponsonby, and Mr. Rigby, the secretary, were obliged to make their appearance in the portico of the House, and solemnly assure the people that no union was in contemplation, and that, if such a measure were proposed, they would resist it to the last extremity. The riot, however, was not suppressed without military aid, and, for the first time, zealous patriotic Protestants of the English colony, were ridden down by the King's troops. The anti-union demonstration was essentially and exclusively Protestant, and the Catholics of Dublin made haste to clear themselves of all complicity in it. An inquiry was instituted in Parliament to ascertain who were the authors and promoters of the disturbance; and on that occasion, as some of the very persons guilty in that respect did, by their interest in both Houses, endeavour to fix the odium of it on the obnoxious Papists (to which conscious untruth and calumny the war then carrying on against France gave some kind of colour), the Catholics thought it high time publicly to vindicate their characters from that and every other vile suspicion of disloyalty, by an address to his Grace the Lord Lieutenant, testifying their warmest gratitude for the lenity they experienced under his Majesty's Government, and their readiness to concur with the faithfulest and most zealous of his Majesty's other sub-



jects, in opposing, by every means in their power, all, both foreign and domestic, enemies.\*

On the same occasion, Prime Sergeant Stannard, of the "Patriot" party, a gentleman of high honour and probity, in his speech in the House of Commons, contrasting the riotous conduct of the Lucasians (as they were then called after their chief), with the quiet and dutiful behaviour of the Roman Catholics, in that and other dangerous conjunctures, gave the following testimony in favour of these latter :—"We have lived amicably and in harmony among ourselves, and without any material party distinctions, for several years past, till within these few months ; and during the late wicked rebellion in Scotland, we had the comfort and satisfaction to see that all was quiet here. And to the honour of the Roman Catholics be it remembered, that not a man of them moved tongue, pen, or sword, upon the then or the present occasion : and I am glad to find that they have a grateful and proper sense of the mildness and moderation of our Government. For my part, while they behave with duty and allegiance to the present establishment, I shall hold them as men in equal esteem with others in every point but one ; and while their private opinion interferes not with public tranquility, I think their industry and allegiance ought to be encouraged."

It deserves remark, then, that on this first occasion when a project of legislative union was really entertained by an English ministry, the "Patriot" party, which opposed it, was wholly and exclusively of the Protestant colony, and that the Catholics of Ireland were totally indifferent ; and, indeed, they could not rationally be otherwise, as it was quite impossible for them to feel an attachment to a national legislature in which they were not represented, and for whose members they could not even cast a vote.

The French naval expedition was in preparation at the ports of Brest and Dunkirk, and the enthusiastic Franco-Irish officers did not doubt that if it could once land in Ireland, and obtain a first success, the whole Catholic nation would rise to support it. The anticipation would have been realized, if the two squadrons could have united, and then entered a southern or western port. But now, as in other instances, the fortune of war and weather on the sea befriended England. The Brest squadron was a powerful one, and was placed under command of Admiral Conflans ; that fitted out at Dunkirk was intrusted to Thurot, who had gained distinction as commander of a privateer, sweeping the Channel and

\* Curry's Review.

German Ocean, of British commerce. In the year 1759, our excellent and conscientious historian, Plowden, was a boy, and in company with some other Catholic boys, was on board a vessel bound for France, to obtain the education which was by law debarred them at home. Their ship was chased, boarded and captured, between Ostend and Dunkirk, by a French vessel of war, which turned out to be no other than Thurot's ship, the *Belle Isle*, commanded by that redoubtable sea rover. The boys, along with the rest of the crew, were carried as prisoners to Flushing, where they remained some weeks, guarded on board the *Belle Isle* while she was undergoing repairs. Plowden describes here a desperate mutiny of the wild crew of the *Belle Isle*, which, however, was fiercely suppressed by the officers—Thurot himself killing two of the ringleaders, and cutting off the cheek of another. The young prisoners were shortly after exchanged.

This rude but gallant seaman was placed in command of the squadron of five ships then being fitted out at Dunkirk, to co-operate with Conflans. In the autumn of 1759 they both sailed; their rendezvous was to be in the Irish Sea. Conflans was encountered by the English Hawke and entirely defeated, while Thurot, after long cruising around the islands, and wintering in Norway, at last, in February, 1760, entered Lough Foyle with only three of his five vessels. One had been lost, and one had been sent back to France. He did not think fit to come up to Derry, which he probably imagined to be a stronger place than it really was, but coasted round the shores of Antrim, and suddenly appeared before Carrickfergus Castle, on Belfast Lough, upon the 21st of February. He summoned the castle to surrender; it was defended by a small garrison, commanded by a Colonel Jennings; and on Jennings' refusal to capitulate, the cannonade began. The peaceable Protestant citizens of Belfast could now, from their own streets, see the flash and hear the roar of the guns. They did not yet know the force of the invading squadron, and for a time believed that here were at last the French "bringing in the Pretender," overthrowing the "Ascendency," and taking back the forfeited estates. After a gallant resistance, the castle and town of Carrickfergus were taken, but with the loss of a considerable number of French soldiers, and Clobert, the brigadier-general of their land force, was wounded. The French kept possession of the town and castle for five days, and levied some contributions in Carrickfergus of such things as they needed after their long cruise. The town of Belfast contained at that time less than 9,000 inhabitants, but it was a prosperous trading place, and entirely Protestant. Alarm was instantly sent out through the

counties of Down, Antrim, and Armagh, the most populous Protestant districts of the island, and within this interval of five days 2,220 volunteers were thronging towards Belfast, badly armed, indeed, and not disciplined at all, but zealous for the "Ascendency" and the House of Hanover. Thurot had little more than 500 soldiers left, besides his sailors; he knew also that English men-of-war would very soon appear at the mouth of Belfast Lough; therefore he did not venture upon Belfast, especially as there was no sign of a Catholic rising anywhere to support him. He re-embarked on the 26th, and was encountered in the Irish Sea by three English ships of superior force. He gave battle, and fought with the utmost desperation; but at last his three vessels were captured, after Thurot himself was killed, with 300 of his men. His shattered ships were towed into a port of the Isle of Man. Testimonies to the humanity and gallantry of this brave officer are freely accorded by his enemies.

King George the Second died this year, after a long and eventful reign. His personal character and dispositions were wholly immaterial to the course of events in this kingdom. Although his English subjects disliked him as a German, to Ireland he was a thorough Englishman—bound by his policy, as well as compelled by his advisers, to maintain the "English Interest," in opposition to that of Ireland. And this point was successfully and triumphantly carried, at every period of his reign, sometimes by strengthening the Court party, sometimes by buying up the "Patriots." There had been (over and above the usual suffering from poverty) two *famines*; also a considerable emigration of Presbyterians from the northern counties, to escape from the payment of tithes and from the disabilities created by the Test Act. The population of the island remained nearly stationary during the whole reign. In 1726 it was 2,309,106, and in 1754 it was 2,372,634—an increase of little more than sixty thousand in twenty-eight years.\* The manufacture of woollen cloth had almost disappeared, but in the eastern part of Ulster the linen trade had taken a considerable extension.

It is impossible to exaggerate, and hard to conceive in all its horror, the misery and degradation of the Catholic people, throughout this whole period, although active persecution ceased during the year of the battle of Fontenoy, and the Scottish insurrection. On the whole, this was the era of priest-hunting, of

\* There was no census taken in either of those years. The estimates of the population given in *Thom's Directory* are founded upon such returns, parochial registers, and the like, as were accessible.

"discoveries," and of an universal plunder of such property as remained in the hands of Catholics. In this pitiful struggle the wild humour of the race would sometimes break out; and often desperate deeds were done by beggared men. The story of two of the Geoghegans, of Meath, is so characteristic of the time as to deserve a place here. It is related by the author of "The Irish, Abroad and at Home;" a very desultory and chaotic, but generally both authentic and entertaining work.

"Seventy or eighty years ago, there resided in Soho Square, London, an Irish Roman Catholic gentleman, known among his friends as 'Geoghegan, of London.' Pretending to be, or being really alarmed, lest a relative (Mr. Geoghegan, of Jamestown), should conform to the Protestant religion, and possess himself of a considerable property, situate in Westmeath, he resolved upon a proceeding, to which the reader will attach any epithet it may seem to warrant.

"He repaired to Dublin, reported himself to the necessary authorities, and professed in all its required legal forms, the Protestant religion on a Sunday, sold his estates on Monday, and relapsed into Popery on Tuesday.

"He did not effect these changes unostentatiously; for 'He saw no reason for *mauvaise honte*,' as he called it. He expressed admiration of the same principle of convenient apostasy, which governed Henry IV.'s acceptance of the French crown. 'Paris vaut bien une messe,' said that gay, chivalrous, but somewhat unscrupulous monarch. Thus, when asked the motive of his abjuration of Catholicism, Geoghegan replied: 'I would rather trust my soul to God for a day, than my property to the fiend for ever.'

"This somewhat impious speech was in keeping with his conduct at Christ Church when he made his religious profession: the sacramental wine being presented to him, he drank off the entire contents of the cup. The officiating clergyman rebuked his indecorum. 'You need not grudge it me,' said the neophyte: 'it's the dearest glass of wine I ever drank.'

"In the afternoon of the same day he entered the Globe Coffee Room, Essex Street, then frequented by the most respectable of the citizens of Dublin. The room was crowded. Putting his hand to his sword, and throwing a glance of defiance around, Geoghegan said.

"'I have read my recantation to-day, and any man who says I did right is a rascal.'

"A Protestant with whom he was conversing the moment before he left home to read his recantation, said to him: 'For all your assumed Protestantism, Geoghegan, you will die a Papist.'



“‘*Fi done, mon ami!*’ replied he. ‘That is the *last* thing of which I am capable.’

“One more specimen of the operation of the penal laws may be given.

“Mr. Geoghegan had a relative, Mr. Kedagh Geoghegan, of Donower, in the county of Westmeath, who, though remaining faithful to the creed of his forefathers, enjoyed the esteem and respect of the Protestant resident gentry of his county. Notwithstanding that his profession of the Roman Catholic religion precluded his performing the functions of a grand juror, he attended the assizes at Mullingar regularly, in common with other gentlemen of Westmeath, and dined with the grand jurors.

“On one of those occasions, a Mr. Stepney, a man of considerable fortune in the county, approached him and remarked: ‘Geoghegan, that is a capital team to your carriage. I have rarely seen four finer horses—nor better matched. Here, Geoghegan, are twenty pounds,’ tendering him a sum of money in gold. ‘You understand me. They are mine.’ And he moved towards the door, apparently with the intention of taking possession of his purchase. The horses, not yet detached from Mr. Geoghegan’s carriage, were still in the yard of the inn close by.

“‘Hold, Stepney!’ said Geoghegan. ‘Wait one moment. I shall not be absent more than that time.’ He then quitted the room abruptly, and was seen running in great haste towards the inn at which he always put up.

“There was something in the scene which had just occurred which shocked the feelings of the witnesses of it, and something in the manner of Geoghegan, that produced among them a dead silence and a conviction that it was not to end there. Not a word was yet spoken, when the reports of four pistol shots struck their ears, and in a few seconds afterwards Geoghegan was perceived coming from the direction of the inn, laden with firearms. He mounted to the room in which the party were assembled, holding by their barrels a brace of pistols in each hand. Walking directly up to Stepney, he said: ‘Stepney, you cannot have the horses for which you bid just now.’

“‘I can, and will have them.’

“‘You can’t. I have shot them; and Stepney, unless you be as great a coward as you are a scoundrel, I will do my best to shoot you. Here, choose your weapon, and take your ground. Gentlemen, open if you please and see fair play.’

“He then advanced upon Stepney, offering him the choice of either pair of pistols. Stepney, however, declined the combat and quitted the room, leaving Geoghegan the object of the unani-

mous condolences of the rest of the party, and overwhelmed with their expression of sympathy and of regret for the perversion of the law of which Mr. Stepney had just sought to render him the object.

“In tendering twenty pounds for horses that were worth twenty times that sum, Stepney was only availing himself of one of the enactments of the Penal Code, which forbade a Papist the possession of a horse of greater value than five pounds.

“Notwithstanding this incident, old Kedagh Geoghegan continued to visit Mullingar during the Assizes for many years afterwards ; but to avoid a similar outrage, and to keep in recollection the cruel nature of the Popery laws, his cattle thenceforward consisted of four oxen.”

Another and a graver illustration of the general condition of the Catholics is the “Petition and Remonstrance” addressed to King George II. by some members of that body. It is found at length in Dr. Curry’s excellent collection, and although it presents no new facts in addition to those already mentioned in the narration, it is interesting as an example of the tone and attitude which Catholics then thought it necessary to assume in addressing their master.

TO THE KING’S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY.

*The humble Petition and Remonstrance of the Roman Catholics of Ireland.*

“MOST GRACIOUS SOVEREIGN :—We your Majesty’s dutiful and faithful subjects, the Roman Catholics of the Kingdom of Ireland, beg leave to lay at your Majesty’s feet this humble remonstrance of some of those grievances and restraints under which we have long laboured without murmuring or complaint ; and we presume to make this submissive application, from a sense of your Majesty’s great and universal clemency, of your gracious and merciful regard to tender consciences, and from a consciousness of our own loyalty, affection, and gratitude to your Majesty’s person and government, as duties incumbent upon us, which it is our unalterable resolution to pay in all events during the remainder of our lives.

“And we are the more emboldened to present this our humble remonstrance, because it appeareth unto us, that the laws by which such grievances are occasioned, and such penalties inflicted upon us, have taken rise rather from private views of expediency and self-interest, or from mistaken jealousies and mistrusts, than from any truly public spirited motives ; inasmuch as they seemed to have infringed certain privileges, rights, and immunities, which

had been freely and solemnly granted, together with a promise of further favour and indulgence to the Roman Catholics of Ireland, upon the most valuable considerations. For we most humbly offer to your Majesty's just and generous consideration, that on the 3rd day of October, 1691, the Roman Catholic nobility and gentry of this kingdom, under the late King James, entered into articles of capitulation at Limerick, whereby, among other things it was stipulated and agreed, 'that the Roman Catholics of Ireland should enjoy such privilege in the exercise of their religion as they did enjoy in the reign of King Charles II., and that their majesties as soon as their affairs would permit them, would summon a Parliament in Ireland, and endeavour to procure the said Roman Catholics such further security in that particular, as might preserve them from any disturbance on account of their said religion.' Whereupon these noblemen and gentlemen laid down their arms, and immediately submitted to their Majesties' Government; at the same time that they had offers of powerful assistance from France, which might, if accepted, have greatly obstructed the success of their majesties' arms in the war then carrying on abroad against that kingdom,

"And although these articles were duly ratified and confirmed, first by the commander-in-chief of their majesties' forces in Ireland in conjunction with the then lords-justices thereof, and afterwards by an act of the Irish Parliament, in the ninth year of his Majesty King William's reign, by which they became the public faith of the nation, plighted and engaged to these people in as full, firm, and solemn manner, as ever public faith was plighted to any people; yet so far were the Roman Catholics of Ireland from receiving the just benefit thereof; so far from seeing any steps taken, or means used in the Irish Parliament to procure them such promised security, as might preserve them from any disturbance on account of their religion, that, on the contrary, several laws have been since enacted in that Parliament, by which the exercise of their religion is made penal, and themselves and their heirs for ever have forfeited those rights, immunities and titles to their estates and properties, which in the reign of King Charles II. they were by law entitled to, and enjoyed in common with the rest of their fellow-subjects.

"And such is the evil tendency of these laws to create jealousy and disgust between parents and their children, and especially to stifle in the breasts of the latter those pious sentiments of filial duty and obedience which reason dictates, good policy requires, and which the Almighty so strictly enjoins, that in virtue of



them, a son, however undutiful or profligate in other respects, shall merely by the merit of conforming to the Established religion, not only deprive the Roman Catholic father of that free and full possession of his estate, that power to mortgage or otherwise dispose of it, as the exigencies of his affairs may require, but also shall himself have full liberty to mortgage, sell, or otherwise alienate that estate from his family for ever; a liberty most gracious sovereign, the frequent use of which has entailed poverty and despair on some of the most ancient and opulent families in this kingdom, and brought many a parent's gray hairs with sorrow to the grave.

"And although very few estates at present remain in the hands of the Roman Catholics of Ireland, and therefore little or no matter appears to be left for these laws to operate upon, nevertheless, we are so far from being secure in the possession of personal property, so far from being preserved from any disturbance on account of our religion, even in that respect, that new and forced constructions have been of late years put upon these laws (for we cannot think that such constructions were ever originally intended), by which, on the sole account of our religion, we are in many cases, stripped of that personal property by discoverers and informers; a set of men, most gracious sovereign, once generally and justly despised amongst us, but of late grown into some repute, by the increase of their numbers, and by the frequency, encouragement, and success of their practices.

"These and many other cruel restrictions (such as no Christian people under heaven but ourselves are made liable to) are and have long been greatly detrimental, not only to us in particular, but also to the commerce, culture, and every other improvement of this kingdom in general; and what is surely a melancholy consideration, are chiefly beneficial to the discoverers and informers before mentioned; who under colour of these laws, plunder indiscriminately, parents, brethren, kinsmen, and friends, in despite of all the ties of blood, of affection and confidence, in breach of the divine laws, of all former human laws, enacted in this or perhaps in any other kingdom, for the security of property, since the creation of the world.

"The necessity of continuing laws in their full force for so great a number of years, which are attended with such shameful and pernicious consequences, ought, we humbly conceive, to be extremely manifest, pressing, and permanent; but so far is this from being the case with respect to these disqualifying laws, that even the pretended grounds for those jealousies and mistrusts, which are said to have given birth to them, have long since dis-



appeared ; it being a well-known and undeniable truth, that your Majesty's distressed, but faithful subjects, the Roman Catholics of Ireland, have neither the inclination nor the power to disturb your Majesty's Government, nor can (we humbly presume) that only pretext now left for continuing them in force, viz., their tendency to make proselytes to the Established religion, in any degree justify the manifold severities and injuries occasioned by them. For, alas ! most gracious sovereign, there is but too much reason to believe, that proselytes so made are, for the most part, such in appearance only, in order to become in reality, what all sincere Christians condemn and detest, undutiful children, unnatural brethren, or perfidious friends ; and we submit it to your Majesty's great wisdom and goodness, whether motives so repugnant to the public interest, and to all social, moral, and religious duties, are fit to be confided in or longer encouraged.

“ And because we are sensible, most gracious sovereign, that our professions of loyalty have been often cruelly misrepresented, even by those who were thoroughly acquainted with the candour and uprightness of our dealings in all other respects, we must humbly offer it to your princely and generous consideration, that we rest not the proof of our sincerity in such professions or words, but on things known and attested by all the world, on our dutiful, peaceable, and submissive behaviour under such pressures, for more than half a century ; a conduct, may it please your Majesty, that clearly evinces the reality of that religious principle, which withholds us from sacrificing conscience or honour to any worldly interest whatever ; since rather than violate either by hypocritical professions, we have all our lives patiently suffered so many restrictions and losses in our temporal concerns ; and we most submissively beseech your Majesty to look down on such trials of our integrity, not only as a proof of our sincerity in this declaration, but also as an earnest and surety of our future good behaviour ; and to give us leave to indulge the pleasing hope, that the continuance of that behaviour, enforced by our religious principles, and of your Majesty's great and inherent goodness towards us, which it will be the business of our lives to endeavour to merit, may at length be the happy means of our deliverance from some part of that burden, which we have so long and so patiently endured.

“ That this act of truly royal commiseration, beneficence and justice, may be added to your Majesty's many other heroic virtues, and that such our deliverance may be one of those distinguished blessings of your reign, which shall transmit its

memory to the love, gratitude, and veneration of our latest posterity, is the humble prayer of," &c.

This very humble petition was never presented to the King. It was communicated, says Dr. Curry, "to the Right Reverend Dr. Stone, and was approved of by his Grace, and by as many of his discerning and confidential friends as he thought proper to show it to, as he himself assured Lord Taaffe." But in this case also, the Catholics themselves did not agree as to the proper steps to be taken; and the death of the Primate, shortly after, seems to have put an end to all proceedings upon it. This odious Primate, in the last years of his life, became quite friendly to the Catholics. The "English interests" in Ireland needed some support against the "Patriots," who set up the dangerous pretension to vindicate the national independence of the colony; and the Government already began to rely upon the Catholics as a means and agent of perpetuating British domination.

As for the condition of the country people, it continued to be very miserable. A few of the queries contained in Bishop Berkeley's "Querist" will sufficiently describe their case. He asks:—

"Whether there be upon earth any Christian or civilized people so beggarly, wretched, and destitute, as the common Irish?"—"Whether, nevertheless, there is any other people whose wants may be more easily supplied from home?"—"Whether, if there was a wall of brass a thousand cubits high round this kingdom, our natives might not nevertheless live cleanly and comfortably, till the land, and reap the fruits of it?"—"Whether a foreigner could imagine that one-half of the people were starving, in a country which sent out such plenty of provisions?"—"Whether it is possible the country should be well improved while our beef is exported and our labourers live upon potatoes?"—"Whether trade be not then on a right footing when foreign commodities are imported only in exchange for domestic superfluities?"—"Whether the quantities of beef, butter, wool, and leather exported from this island can be reckoned the superfluities of a country, where there are so many natives naked and famished?" From these queries it is evident enough that the good and just-minded bishop traced the wretchedness of his countrymen to its true cause, namely, the settled determination of England to regulate all the industry of Ireland for her own use and profit: which indeed has continued to be the one great plague of the country from that day to this.

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## CHAPTER XIII.

1760—1762.

KING GEORGE THE THIRD mounted the throne of England in October, 1760, at twenty-two years of age. He was grandson to the late King, being the son of the Prince of Wales, Frederick Louis, whom the old King very cordially hated. The mother of George III. was a German Princess of the House of Saxe Gotha—a family which has since cost dear to the three kingdoms; and a year after his accession, he married another German Princess, of the House of Mecklenburg-Strelitz. But the new King himself was born in England; a circumstance which greatly rejoiced the English of that day. He had been educated for a time in the choicest Whig principles by his father; and as an English historian informs us, “great and incessant pains were taken to infuse into the mind of ‘the Second Hope of Britain’ just and elevated sentiments of Government and of civil and religious liberty.”\* But after the death of Prince Frederick Louis, his mother, the Princess Dowager of Wales, gave quite a new direction to the education of her son; and under the guidance of the afterwards celebrated Lord Bute, brought him up in the highest and choicest doctrines of Toryism and Prerogative. He certainly profited by both those systems of tuition, and united in his conduct upon the throne all the corruption and cant of Whiggery with whatever is most coarsely tyrannical, dogged, blind, and imperious in Toryism.

\* In an occasional Address, or Prologue, spoken by Prince George, on acting a part in the tragedy of Cato, performed at Leicester House about the year 1749, he was instructed thus to express himself:—

“The poet’s labours elevate the mind,  
Teach our young hearts with generous fire to burn,  
And feel the virtuous sentiments we learn.  
T’attain those glorious ends, what play so fit  
As that where all the powers of human wit  
Combine to dignify great Cato’s name,  
To deck his tomb and consecrate his fame?  
Where LIBERTY—O name for ever dear!  
Breathes forth in every line, and bids us fear  
Nor pains nor death to guard our sacred laws,  
But bravely perish in our country’s cause.  
Should this superior to my years be thought.  
*Know ’tis the first great lesson I was taught.”*

Liberty, in the language of that day, meant the Protestant interest, and Protestant Ascendency in Church and State.

When he came to the throne and met Parliament for the first time, Mr. Pitt was still Prime Minister; and we accordingly find the Whiggish element to prevail in the famous royal speech delivered on that occasion. His first words took the heart of the nation by storm;—"Born and educated in this country, I glory in the name of Briton." But one can well imagine what bitter reflections passed through the mind of an educated Irish Catholic, like Charles O'Connor, or Curry, as he read the remaining sentences of the discourse. "The civil and religious rights" said the King, "of my loving subjects are equally dear to me with the most valuable prerogatives of the Crown." It was his inviolable resolution, he said, "to adhere to and strengthen this excellent Constitution in Church and State." "It was his fixed purpose" he declared, "to countenance and encourage the practice of *true* religion and virtue"—which fixed purpose of course bound him to discourage and to punish all false religions. Finally he exclaimed to his Parliament;—"The eyes of all Europe are upon you. From you the *Protestant interest* hopes for protection, as well as all our friends for the preservation of their independency. . . . In this expectation I am the more encouraged by a pleasing circumstance which I look upon as one of the most auspicious omens of my reign—that happy extinction of divisions, and that union and good harmony which continue to prevail amongst my subjects afford me the most agreeable prospect." His Majesty also was pleased to say, "that he would maintain *the toleration* inviolable."

The "toleration" here spoken of, in so far as it included Irish Papists, meant simple *connivance* at Catholic worship, so long as that was practised very quietly, in obscure places. It did not mean exemption or relief from any one of the disabilities or penalties which had abolished the civil existence of Catholics; it did not mean that they could be educated, either at home or abroad; nor that they could possess arms, or horses, or farms on a longer lease than thirty-one years; nor that they could sit in Parliament, or municipal councils, or parish vestries, or in any way participate in the voting away of their own money. It did not mean that their clergy could receive orders in Ireland, or go abroad to receive them without incurring the penalty of transportation, and, if they returned, death:—nor that Catholics could practise law or medicine, or sit on juries, or be guardians to their own children, or lend money on mortgage (if they earned any money), or go to a foreign country, or have any of the rights of human beings in their own. By the connivance of the Government, they were permitted to breathe, and to go to Mass, and to



do almost nothing else, except live by their labour and pay taxes and penal fines. Such is the precise limitation of that "toleration," which King George said would be inviolably maintained : and it was inviolably maintained during the first thirty-three years of this reign with certain trifling alleviations which are to be mentioned in their proper place.

The accession of King George III. took place at an auspicious and prosperous time, for England, though not for Ireland. The war was proceeding favourably to Great Britain in all parts of the earth and sea ; and it was in this year 1760 and the following year that the great struggle between France and England for the colonial empire of India came to a crisis and was decided against France, and therefore disastrously for Ireland. The war in India would not here much concern us but for its connection with the sad fate of Count Lally. He was now a lieutenant-general in the French armies, and M. de Voltaire informs us that it was his well-known hatred of the English which caused him to be selected for the honour of commanding the force which was to encounter them on the coast of Coromandel. His regiment, that had fought at Fontenoy, was with him ; and one of the officers who held high command under him was the Chevalier Geoghegan.\* He found every thing in disarray at Pondicherry, the capital of the French possessions ; very insufficient forces, but little provisions, and no money at all. Voltaire says:—"Notwithstanding the gloomy views he took of every thing, he had at first some happy success. He took from the English the fort St. David, some leagues from Pondicherry and raised its walls in April, 1758." The same year he besieged Madras, took the "black town," but failed before the fortress. His own correspondence, which is in part given to us by Voltaire, attributes this failure to monstrous peculation and waste in the department for supplying the army. Indeed he seems to have very soon come to the conclusion that nothing effectual could be done ; that he was abandoned to his fate, and that the French power in Hindostan was doomed. Nothing can exceed the passionate outbursts of his grief and indignation in some of these letters. "Hell," he says "has vomited me out upon this land of iniquity ; and I am only awaiting, like Jonah, for the whale that is to swallow me." Among his other troubles, the troops mutinied, and the revolt was appeased with much trouble. Then continues Voltaire, "the general led them into the province of Arcot, to recover the fortress of Vandavachi, of which the English had possessed themselves after two

\* Voltaire, *Siècle de Louis XV.*

ineffectual attempts; in one of which they had been completely defeated by the Chevalier Geoghegan. Lally ventured to attack them with inferior forces, and would have conquered them if he had been duly seconded. As it was, he only gained in that expedition the honour of having given a new proof of the determined courage which formed his leading characteristic." This is the battle known to the English by the name of "Wandewash."

At length Lally was obliged to collect all his troops in Pondicherry, resolved to defend it to the last extremity; it was blockaded at once by land and sea. Here, again, every thing seemed to irritate his impetuous temper; he insulted the governor, and all the council, and threatened to harness them to his provision waggons, if they did not provide horses. "I had rather," he exclaims in one letter, "go and command Caffres, than stay in this Sodom, which it is impossible but the fire of the English must destroy sooner or later, for want of fire from heaven." The siege was long, and the defence desperate. Just at the moment that King George III. ascended the throne, this gallant and impetuous Count Lally was holding his post with obstinate valour against an English fleet and army. But the people in Pondicherry were dying in the streets of hunger, and the council of the city was crying out to Lally to surrender. On the 16th of January, 1761, he was unhappily obliged to yield; and so the French lost India in the east, almost on the same day that they lost Canada in the west, by the surrender of Montreal. There was a delirium of joy in England, and the heart of the Irish nation sank low.\*

Even the English colony in Ireland, though it sympathized with British successes, to which, indeed, it contributed more than its share both in men and in money (meaning the earnings of the subject nation as well as its own), yet had no reason, on the accession of this king, to congratulate itself on its happy and prosperous condition. In truth the island had been well drained

\* Unfortunate Lally had made many enemies, chiefly by his furious temper. They were powerful in France, while he was comparatively a stranger, though born in the country. They accused him of misconduct, tyranny, exactions, *betraying* the interests of the King. At length the outcry against him became so strong, that he was arrested, confined in the Bastille, kept there for fifteen months without any specific charge, then brought to trial and kept on trial two years; finally, condemned and executed. Voltaire, who has uniformly praised Lally, defends him in his *Louis XV.*; and afterwards generously vindicated his memory, and aided his son to procure the decree of the Parliament rehabilitating the name of this brave and "murdered" man. Louis XV. himself, after the death of Lally, exclaimed:—"They have assassinated him."

of its revenues to meet the increased military expenses of Great Britain; and it had become necessary within the past year (1759) to raise a loan of £150,000, on debentures at four per cent. transferable, in order to pay the increasing arrears on the public establishments. Certain duties were granted to provide for the payment of the interest; and this may be considered as the beginning of the funded debt of Ireland. But in the beginning of 1760, the King having again considerably augmented his military forces, Ireland was required to raise another loan of £300,000, and a vote of credit passed the Commons for this object, but at five per cent. Then, as it was found that the first loan of £150,000, was not coming in at four per cent., an additional *one* per cent., was offered for that. Thus, when George III. came to the throne, the revenues of Ireland were considerably embarrassed and oppressed. Mr. Hely Hutchison, a good authority on this point, in his work on the "commercial restrictions of Ireland," states, indeed, that "all Irishmen" felt they ought to sustain the efforts of Great Britain in that crisis, but that the Statesmen of the latter country always expected too much; and while they looked upon the great prosperity and wealth of their own country, had not sufficient consideration for the poverty of Ireland. Two or three sentences taken from this book (the Commercial Restrictions) give a clear idea of the financial condition of the island. "The revenue had decreased in 1755, fell lower in 1756, and still lower in 1757. In the last year the vaunted prosperity of Ireland was changed into misery and distress, the lower classes of the people wanted food." Again—"The public expenses were greatly increased; the pensions on the civil-list, at Lady-day, 1759, amounted to £55,497; there was at the same time a great augmentation of military expense. Six new regiments and a troop were raised in a very short space of time." From all these causes the author states that the payment out of the treasury in little more than one year was £703,957. "The effects," he continues, "of these exactions were immediately and severely felt by the kingdom. These loans could not be supplied by a poor country without draining the bankers of their cash; three of the principal houses (Clements, Dawsons, and Mitchell) among them, stopped payment; the three remaining banks in Dublin discounted no paper, and in fact did no business. Public and private credit that had been drooping since the year 1754, had now fallen prostrate. At a general meeting of the merchants of Dublin in April, 1760, with several members of the House of Commons, the inability of the former to carry on business was universally acknowledged," &c.

The scarcity of money now employed in trade or improve-



ments, together with the laws which made it impossible for Catholics to exercise any lucrative industry in corporate towns, caused more and more of the people to be dependent upon agriculture and sheep-farming alone. But the lot of these poor agriculturists was hard, for the landed proprietors under whom they had to live, were an alien and hostile race, having no sympathy with the humble people around them. This lamentable circumstance is peculiar to Ireland. Neither in England nor in Scotland was the case of the peasantry ever rendered bitterer than poverty makes it at any rate, by differences of race and of religion. In Ireland they found themselves face to face, not two classes, but two nations; of which the one had substantially the power of life and death over the other. When we add to this that one of these two nations had despoiled the other of those very lands which the plundered race were now glad to cultivate as rack-rented tenants; and also that the dominant nation felt bound to hate the other, both as "rebels" who needed only the opportunity to rise and cut their masters' throats, and as Papists who clung to the "damnable idolatry" of the Mass, we can easily understand the difficulty of the "landlord and tenant question" in Ireland. We have now, in fact, arrived at the era of the "Whiteboy" organization, which was itself the legitimate offspring of the "Rapparees," and which in its turn has given birth to "Ribbonism," to the "Terry Alts," and finally to the "Fenians." The principle and meaning of all these various forms of secret Irish organization has been the same at all times, namely, the instinct of resistance to legal oppression by illegal combinations among the oppressed. And this has been inevitable, and far from blameable, under the circumstances of the country. All the laws were made not for, but against the great mass of the people; the courts of justice were entirely in the possession of the oppressors; the proscribed race saw only mortal enemies on the bench, enemies in the jury-box, enemies everywhere all around, and were continually made to feel that law and justice were not for them. This of course, in times of distress, threw them back upon the only resource of desperate men, conspiracy, intimidation, and vengeance.

We have seen by the statements of Mr. J. Hely Hutchinson, that in the last year of King George II. "the lower classes of the people wanted food." The financial distress soon made matters still worse, and almost immediately after the accession of the new king, the whole island began to be startled by formidable rumours of disturbances and tumults in the south. The immediate cause of the first breaking out of these disorders was that many land-



lords in Munster began to enclose commons, on which their rack-rented tenants had, up to that time, enjoyed the right of commonage as some compensation for the extreme severity of the terms on which they held their farms. The enclosure of these commons took away from them the only means they had of lightening their burden and making their hard tenure supportable. In Waterford, in Cork, and in Tipperary, angry crowds assembled, tore down the enclosures, and sometimes maltreated the workmen employed in putting them up. The aggrieved peasantry soon combined their operations, associated together by secret oaths, and these confederates began to be known as Whiteboys. A second cause for the discontents, which soon swelled the society of Whiteboys, was the cruel exactions of the tithe proctors—persons who farmed the tithes of a parish rector, and then screwed the utmost farthing out of the parishioners, often selling out their crops, their stocks, even their beds, to make up the subsidy for clergymen whose ministrations they never attended. Resistance, therefore, to tithes, and the occasional amputation of a tithe proctor's ears, formed a large part of the proceedings of the Whiteboys.\*

The riots of these few forlorn men were soon construed into a general Popish conspiracy against the Government; because, indeed, the greatest part of them were Papists, at least in name; although it was well-known that several Protestant gentlemen and magistrates of considerable influence in that province, did all along, for their own private ends, connive at, if not foment, these tumults, and although we were assured by authority "that

\* See Dr. Curry's *Review*. He was a contemporary. See also Arthur Young's "*Tour in Ireland*." Young was one of the most observant of travellers, and has examined this whole subject in a very fair spirit. He thus speaks of the state of the people under their landlords:—"The execution of the law lies very much in the hands of justices of the peace, many of whom are drawn from the most illiberal class in the kingdom. If a poor man lodges a complaint against a gentleman, or any animal that chooses to call itself a gentleman, and the justice issues out a summons for his appearance, it is a fixed affront, and he will infallibly be *called out*. Where *manners* are in conspiracy against *law*, to whom are the oppressed people to have recourse? They know their situation too well to think of it; they can have no defence but by means of protection from one gentleman against another, who probably protects his vassal as he would the sheep he intends to eat.

"The colours of this picture are not charged. To assert that all these cases are common, would be an exaggeration; but to say that an unfeeling landlord will do all this with impunity, is to keep strictly to truth; and what is liberty but a farce and a jest, if its blessings are received as the favour of kindness and humanity, instead of being the inheritance of RIGHT?"—*Young's Tour, Dub. Edit.*, vol. ii., pp. 40, 41.

the authors of these riots consisted indiscriminately of persons of different persuasions, and that no marks of disaffection to his Majesty's person or Government appeared in any of these people." This was officially published in the *London Gazette*.

This authentic declaration was grounded on the report which had been made to Government by persons of admitted loyalty and eminence in the law, sent down and commissioned some time before to inquire upon the spot into the real causes and circumstances of these riots ; which report was afterwards confirmed by the going judges of assize, and by the dying protestations of the first five of these unhappy men, who were executed in 1762 at Waterford, for having been present at the burning down of a cabin, upon the information of one of their associates, who was the very person that with his own hand set fire to it. These men immediately before their execution, publicly declared and took God to witness, "that in all these tumults it never did enter into their thoughts to do any thing against the Government."

A considerable force of regular troops was sent to the south ; some savage military execution done ; which was again followed by fresh outrages ; and the disorder continued unabated for several years.

About the same time when Whiteboys first began to be heard of, various other secret societies sprang up in Ulster. These associations called themselves variously, Hearts-of-Steel, Oak-Boys, and Peep-of-Day Boys ; but their members were all Protestants ; and their grievances and objects were in part connected with landlord oppression and clerical exaction, partly with the alleged injustice of the employers of manufacturing labour. These latter disturbances were soon over, because first, the grievances were not so deep-seated, and next, because the parties on the two sides being mainly of the same race and religion, the enmity and exasperation were never so fierce, and were far more easily appeased. While all these last-named conspiracies speedily disappeared, Whiteboyism remained, and under one form or another must remain till English domination in Ireland shall be abolished. The honest English tourist, Mr. Young, makes some reflections on these societies which show a most remarkable spirit of fairness, for an Englishman writing about Ireland :—

"Consequences have flowed from these oppressions which ought long ago to have put a stop to them. In England we have heard much of Whiteboys, Steel-Boys, Oak-Boys, Peep-of-Day-Boys, &c. But these various insurgents are not to be confounded, for they are very different. The proper distinction in the contents of the people is into Protestant and Catholic. All but the

Whiteboys are among the manufacturing Protestants in the north : the Whiteboys, Catholic labourers in the south. From the best intelligence I could gain, the riots of the manufacturers had no other foundation, but such variations in the manufacture as all fabrics experience, and which they had themselves known and submitted to before. The case, however, was different with the Whiteboys, who being labouring Catholics, met with all those oppressions I have described, and would probably have continued in full submission had not very severe treatment in respect of tithes, united with a great speculative rise of rents about the same time, blown up the flame of resistance ; the atrocious acts they were guilty of made them the objects of general indignation ; Acts were passed for their punishment, which seemed calculated for the meridian of Barbary ; this arose to such a height, that by one they were to be hanged under circumstances without the common formalities of a trial, which though repealed by the following session, marks the spirit of punishment ; while others remain yet the law of the land, that would, if executed, tend more to raise than quell an insurrection. From all which it is manifest that the gentlemen of Ireland never thought of a radical cure, from overlooking the real cause of disease, which, in fact, lay in themselves, and not in the wretches they doomed to the gallows. Let them change their own conduct entirely, and the poor will not long riot. Treat them like men who ought to be as free as yourselves : put an end to that system of religious persecution which for seventy years has divided the kingdom against itself ; in these two circumstances lies the cure of insurrection, perform them completely, and you will have an affectionate poor, instead of oppressed and discontented vassals."

It will be seen in the sequel how little chance these indignant and well-meant remonstrances had of meeting with attention.

The troubles in Ulster, though they were quite unconnected with Whiteboyism—and though a Catholic would no more have been admitted into a Heart-of-Steel lodge than into a vestry meeting—were yet produced by hardship and oppression. The Presbyterians of the north were now, as well as the Catholics, suffering not only by the Test Act and the tithes, but also by the difficulty of earning an honest livelihood, owing to the scarcity of money and the heavy taxation to meet the demands of Government. Emigration to America, therefore, continued from the northern seaports ; and many active and energetic families were every season seeking a new home beyond the Atlantic. It was now that the fathers of Andrew Jackson, of John C. Calhoun, of James Buchanan, and other eminent American Statesmen, estab-

lished themselves in various parts of the colonies. These exiles were the men who formed the "Pennsylvania Line" in the revolutionary war, and had the satisfaction of contributing powerfully to destroy in America that relentless British domination which had made their Irish homes untenable. While the exiled Catholics on the European Continent were eager to encounter the English power upon any field, those other Protestant exiles in America were ardently engaged in the task of uprooting it in that hemisphere. Yet it is a strange and sad reflection, that although their cause and their grievances, while at home, where very similar, if not identical, they never could bring themselves to combine together *there* against their "common enemy" and oppressor. It must be stated, however, without hesitation, that this was exclusively the fault of the Protestant Dissenters. They hated Popery and Papists even more intensely than did the English colonists of the Anglican church: they had submitted, almost gladly, to disabilities themselves, because they knew that the Catholics were subjected to still worse, and they were unwilling, by a too factious resistance on their own part, to embarrass a system of policy which they were assured was needful to the great cause of Protestant Ascendancy. They might suffer themselves, but they could not make common cause with the "common enemy." For this mean compliance and perverse bigotry they had their reward: they were now flying in crowds from a fair and fertile land which they might have held and enjoyed for ever, if they had united their cause with those who were enduring the same oppressions from the same tyrants.

This may be taken as completing the picture of the social and industrial condition of Ireland in the first year of the reign of George III. It is time to return to the political struggle of the English colony.

The Duke of Bedford, who had been on the whole nearly as popular a Viceroy as Lord Chesterfield, was recalled in 1761, and succeeded by Lord Halifax. A new Parliament was summoned, as usual for the new reign, and on this occasion Dr. Lucas, who had returned from his exile, was returned as one of the Members for Dublin city. Several other new Members of great promise, with "Patriotic" aspirations, also came to this Parliament; amongst whom appeared, for the first time in public life, the celebrated Henry Flood, as Member for Kilkenny. This eminent man took rank very soon as an Irish "Patriot," but at first his patriotism was strictly colonial, that is to say, all his care was for the English Protestant inhabitants of the island. And when the growing power and rising spirit of the colonists soon after aspired to and



achieved a national independence, the nationality he asserted was still strictly and exclusively Protestant. Flood was the son of a former chief justice, and all his relatives and connections were of the highest Protestant Ascendency. Yet, according to his own narrow ideas, it cannot be denied that Flood was a "Patriot;" that is to say, a determined assertor of the sovereign right of the Irish Parliament against the domination of Great Britain. Two other Members of the "Patriot" party, appeared in that Parliament, Mr. Denis Daly and Mr. Hussey Burgh.

In January, 1762, Mr. Hamilton, secretary to Lord Halifax, communicated to the Commons the rupture with Spain. It is not essential to the history of Ireland to follow the course of English diplomatic and military proceedings on the Continent. All those transactions were decided on and prosecuted without the slightest reference to the interest either of the Irish nation or of the British colony; Ireland's only concern with England's wars being in the continual demands for money and men. Accordingly an immediate augmentation of five battalions was now required by Government, together with a vote of credit for raising another half-million sterling. An address was also presented by the Commons to the Lord Lieutenant, to be by him transmitted to the Crown, praying to have the salary of that official raised to £16,000 a-year. Primate Stone was still influential in the Irish Government, as well as the former "Patriot," but now pensioner and placeman, Boyle, Earl of Shannon. The extravagance of Government in every department, the recklessness with which the people were loaded with taxation, and the immense system of bribery resorted to by the administration in order to break down opposition and purchase assured majorities in Parliament, convinced Lucas and his friends that there could be no beginning of redress or remedy for these evils until the Parliament should be made more immediately responsible to the people. In England "Septennial Parliaments" had been the law and the practice for some time, but in Ireland each Parliament was still elected for the life of the King. The agitation for this measure of septennial elections occupied the "Patriotic" party for several years.

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## CHAPTER XIV.

1762—1768.

THE Government of Lord Halifax ended with the session of 1762. This year is considered an eventful one in British annals. Mr. Pitt, and afterwards the Duke of Newcastle, retired from the administration, which came entirely into the hands of Lord Bute, a Tory, as high and violent as it was possible to be, without absolute *Jacobitism*; whose administration showed that the thorough-going doctrines of prerogative were quite as congenial to the House of Hanover as ever they had been to the House of Stuart. On the retirement of Mr. Pitt, the merchants, traders, and citizens of Dublin, who had now become not only an opulent and influential body, but thoroughly imbued with the political theories of Lucas, their representative (who had lately returned from his exile and been returned for the city), presented a most grateful address to Mr. Pitt, expressive of their admiration of his principles, and sincere regret that the country was deprived of his services. The immediate effect of the change of administration upon the conduct of Parliament, demonstrates, however, the extent and depth of the corruption which had there penetrated so deep into the whole body politic of the English colony in Ireland. On the very first day of the last session (22nd October, 1761) the Commons had ordered "that leave be given to bring in the heads of a bill to limit the duration of Parliaments" (the Septennial Bill), in imitation of the Septennial law of England. Dr. Lucas, Mr. Perry, and Mr. George Lowther, were ordered to report and bring up the bill. It was received, read, and committed; amendments were proposed and accepted; in the course of December in that year, the heads of the bill being reported from the committee of the whole House, were finally agreed to. But before any further step was taken, Lord Bute and his Tory ministry came in, and when a motion was made that the Speaker should attend the Lord Lieutenant to give him the bill for transmission to London, in the usual form, the motion was lost by a vote of 108 against 43. This majority of 65 upon a question so reasonable, so necessary, and so constitutional, shows the rapid decline of the Patriotic interest in Ireland after the late changes; the reduction of which was very artfully effected by the two first of the lords-justices, Primate Stone, the Earl of Shannon, and Mr. John Ponsonby, the Speaker. Thus was Mr. Lucas's first Patriotic bill lost, to the no small disappointment and mortification of the people out of doors. It is highly material to

observe, that in proportion as "Patriots" fell off in Parliament, they sprang up out of it. This ministerial triumph was followed by no popular disturbance, but by deep and general disappointment. A meeting of the citizens of Dublin gave expression, calmly and temperately, to the feelings of the people, in a series of resolutions, one of which is worth transcribing, as illustrating the strictly *Protestant* character of all this patriotism. "Resolved, That the clandestine arts which are usually practised (and have been sometimes detected) in obstructing of bills tending to promote the Protestant interest, ought to make Protestants the more active in supporting the Septennial Bill; the rather, as no doubt can remain, that a septennial limitation of Parliaments, would render the generality of landlords assiduous in procuring Protestant tenants, and that the visible advantage accruing, would induce others to conform." His failure did not daunt the indefatigable Dr. Lucas. He presented the heads of bills for securing the freedom of Parliament, by ascertaining the qualifications of knights, citizens, and burgesses, and for vacating the seats of members, who would accept any lucrative office or employment from the Crown, and of persons upon the establishment of Great Britain and Ireland. All these measures failed; the Court party under Lord Bute was now supreme. But this Court party had adopted a different language. It was no longer called the *English interest*, for Primate Stone, was too good a politician to keep up that offensive term, after he had so successfully brought over some of the leading "Patriots" to his side, who in supporting all the measures of the British Cabinet, affected to do it still as *Irish "Patriots."* Among these Irish "Patriots" who had thus prudently sold themselves, and were zealous to give good value for their purchase-money, was Boyle, Earl of Shannon.

The Earl of Halifax had been recalled, and was succeeded as Lord Lieutenant by the Earl of Northumberland. The new Viceroy opened a session of Parliament, in October, 1763, in a speech wherein he expressed, in the King's name, his Majesty's just and gracious regard for a *dutiful and loyal people*, and congratulated them on the birth of a Prince of Wales. They would much rather have had their Septennial Bill.

The next efforts of the "Patriots" were directed against the pension list, which had grown to be an enormous evil and oppression; but the first motion for an address to the King on this subject, was negatived, on a division of 112 against 73. So weak was now the Patriotic cause in the Commons. Pensions continued to be lavished with unchecked profusion. The debate, however, on this motion was warm and spirited. Mr. J. Fitzgerald took

the lead on the "Patriot" side. He stated (and was not contradicted), that the pensions then charged upon the civil establishment of the kingdom amounted to no less than £72,000 per annum, besides the *French* and *military* pensions, and besides the sums paid for old and now unnecessary employments, and those paid in unnecessary additions to the salaries of others: that the pensions, therefore, exceeded the civil list above £42,000: that not only since the House in 1757 had voted the increase of pensions alarming, had they been yearly increased: but that in the time of a most expensive war, and when the country had willingly and cheerfully increased a very considerable national debt; and when the additional influence of the Crown from the levying of new regiments, might well have prevented the necessity of new pensionary gratifications. He then drew a piteous portrait of the country; not one-third peopled; two-thirds of the people unemployed, consequently indolent, wretched, and discontented; neither foreign trade, nor home consumption sufficient to distribute the conveniences of life among them with reasonable equality, or to pay any tax proportionable to their number. What new mode of taxation could be devised? Would they tax leather where no shoes were worn, or tallow where no candles were burned? They could not tax the roots of the earth, and the water on which the wretched peasantry existed; they could tax no commodity that would not defeat itself, by working a prohibition. He then entered into the legal and constitutional rights of the Crown over the public revenue, and strongly resisted the assumed right of charging the public revenue with private pensions. The Crown, he contended, had a public and private revenue: the public it received as a trustee for the public; the private it received in its own right; the former arose out of temporary duties, and was appropriated by Parliament to specific public purposes, and was not left to the discretionary disposal of the Crown. The latter did not in Ireland exceed £7,000 per annum, and the pensions amounting to £72,000 exceeded the fund, which could alone be charged with them, by £65,000 per annum.

The Court party strenuously resisted these arguments, as an unconstitutional and indecent attack upon the prerogative; insisting that the regal dignity should be supported by a power to reward as well as to punish; that the King was not to hold a sword in one hand, and a barren sceptre in the other; that the two great springs of all actions were hope and fear; and where fear only operated, love could have no place; with many other slavish phrases usual in such a case.

In this war against the pension list the most active member of



the Commons was Mr. Perry, member for Limerick. He soon returned to the charge, and moved an address to the King—but with his usual want of success—remonstrating against the wasteful extravagance of the Government. The address was not adopted, but a few sentences of it contain facts worth recording.

“That the expense of the present military establishment amounts in two years to the sum of £980,955 19s. The civil establishment to £242,956 10s. 9d. ; to which must be added at the most moderate computation £300,000 for extraordinary and contingent expenses of Government. That these sums added together amount to the sum of £1,523,912 9s. 9d. That to answer this expense, the whole revenue of this kingdom, the additional as well as hereditary duties, exclusive of the loan duties, which are but barely sufficient to pay the interest of £650,000, the present national debt, amount to the sum of £1,209,864 at a medium for fourteen years ; so that the expense of the nation for these last two years must exceed its whole revenue in a sum of £314,248 9s. 9d., which deficiency being added to the national debt, must leave this kingdom at the next meeting of Parliament near £1,000,000 in debt. . . . That the imports, exports, and home consumption of this kingdom are already taxed to the utmost they can bear. That any addition to these taxes, instead of increasing, must lessen the revenue. That nothing now remains to be taxed but our lands, which are already loaded with quit rents, crown rents, composition rents, and hearth money. That if the present establishments are to continue, the debt of the nation must constantly increase, and in the end prove the utter ruin of the kingdom.”

All these reclamations against pensions and other wasteful or corrupt expenditures, proved utterly unavailing, and the evil went from bad to worse until the true remedy was discovered in 1782.

But this year 1763 is remarkable for the first Parliamentary effort ever made in Ireland to mitigate, in a very small degree, the Penal Code against Catholics. They had been disabled, ever since Queen Anne's time, from taking landed security by way of mortgage on money lent. But this was found inconvenient, not only to them (which would have mattered nothing), but also to Protestants who wanted to borrow money. The Catholics, shut out from political power, had been industrious and thrifty : many of them were rich, but having no security at home, they had invested their money abroad, and thence had sometimes come the supplies for Jacobite invasions. On the 25th November, 1763, Mr. Mason rose in his place and reminded the House that in the last session of Parliament heads of a bill had been passed for

empowering Papists to lend money on mortgages of real estate \* and that the bill had been cushioned by the English Privy Council. He moved accordingly for leave to bring in another. Some of the arguments for and against this measure are very notable. Mr. Mason urged that money was always power, and that money which is placed in Protestant hands, upon mortgage, is power in favour of the State; the same money, in the hands of the Papists unlent, supposing the Papist to be an enemy to the State, was power against it. Besides money was not a local, but transitory property; a Papist, possessed only of money, had no local interest in the country, but a Papist mortgagee had; he would be engaged to support the Government in point of interest: his security for his money was good, while Government subsisted, and in the convulsion that always attends the subversion of Government, it would at least become doubtful; besides, the greater the advantages which the Papists receive under the present constitution, the more they must desire its continuance, and he would venture to say, that if the Papists were to be admitted to all the privileges of Protestant subjects, there would scarce be a practical Jacobite among them, whatever there might be in theory. "I should, therefore, be glad, that the bill should have another trial, and shall move for leave to bring in the heads of a bill, to empower Papists to lend money on the mortgage of land, and to sue for the same."

Mr. Le Hunt said, that he thought the bill proposed would eventually make Papists proprietors of great part of the landed interest of the kingdom, which would certainly extend their influence, and that it was dangerous trusting to the use they would make of it, upon a supposition that their interests would get the better of their principles. That the act mentioned to have passed the last session, did not pass without a division, there being a majority of no more than twelve in its favour, and that it would not have passed at all, if it had not been for some artful management, it being brought in the very last day of session, when no more than sixty-two members were present. He, therefore, begged that the honourable gentleman would postpone his motion till Monday, as the House was then thin, and gentlemen would thus have time to consider the subject, which was of very great importance. He added, that as there was reason to suppose it to be the general sense of the House that such a bill should not

\* There is no entry of this former bill, referred to by Mr. Mason, on the journals of Parliament. Mr. Plowden "laments that those journals are so little to be relied upon when matters relating to the Catholics are the subject of entry."

pass, he thought it would be better that no heads of such bill should be brought in, as it was cruel to raise expectations which would probably be disappointed.

Mr. Mason consented to postpone his motion. Accordingly on the 3rd of February, 1764, Mr. Mason presented to the House, according to order, heads of a bill to ascertain what securities might be taken by persons professing the Popish religion for money lent or to be lent by them, and also what remedies they might enforce.

The House rejected the bill; 138 for the rejection, and 53 against it. Another motion was then made to bring in a bill enabling Papists to take securities upon lands, but in such a manner that they could *never meddle with the possession thereof*; which was immediately negatived by a majority of 44. Yet this was a proposal for a very slight modification of the Penal Code on one single point; and on the express ground that such modification would be useful to the Protestants and would serve the Protestant interest. Its reception marks the stage of advance which principles of religious freedom had then reached.

In December, 1764, Primate Stone and the Earl of Shannon, both happily died. There was no hope of any mitigation in the system of corruption and oppression so long as that league between the English Primate and the purchased "Irish Patriot" subsisted.

The Earl of Hartford was appointed Lord Lieutenant, and opened the session in 1765. In December of that year died at Rome, at an advanced age, the person variously termed King James III., the Pretender, the "King over the water." He had borne his misfortunes with great fortitude and equanimity; and sometimes went to pass the carnival at Venice. His death at last made no impression in Ireland, and was almost unknown there.

The Patriotic party in Parliament was now reduced to its very lowest ebb. It would be wearisome to detail all the motions uniformly defeated, for inquiries into the pension list, and into improper and corrupt appointments to the judicial bench. The "Patriots" tried another plan—an address to the Lord Lieutenant, setting forth the miserable condition of the kingdom, asking for an account of the proceedings of the Privy Council which had cushioned their *Bill for better securing the Freedom of Parliament*, and asking for a return of the patents granted in reversion, &c. But the Court party moved, and carried, that in lieu of the words "the sense of their miserable condition," they should insert the words: "*their happy condition under his Majesty's auspicious Government.*"

Still, ever since the death of Stone and the Earl of Shannon, the party of independence was making some progress in Parliament. Lucas worked hard, and was well sustained by his constituents in Dublin. He made many converts to his Septennial Bill amongst the country gentlemen, and to purchase back some of these converts put the Government to considerable expense—which, it is true, they found means to charge to the people. A new bill was transmitted, through Lord Hartford, for limiting the duration of Parliaments, and again it was stopped by the English Privy Council. Another bill was introduced this session “to prevent the buying and selling of offices which concern the administration of justice, or the collection of his Majesty’s revenue;” but it was voted down in the Commons and never even went to England.

In the mean time the national debt was steadily increasing.

In the year 1765 the revenue of Ireland, although considerably increased upon the whole receipt, still fell so far short of the expenses of Government, that £100,000 was directed to be raised at four per cent., and the principal due upon the different loans was ordered to be consolidated into one sum, making in the whole £595,000 at five per cent., which remained due at Lady-day. The debt of the nation then amounted to £508,874 5s. 9½d. There was this year a great scarcity of grain, as likewise a general failure of potatoes, which was very severely felt by the lower ranks. The Legislature found it necessary to interpose: they passed an act to stop the distilleries for a certain time (which consequently produced a decrease in the Excise), and also an act to prevent the exportation of corn; in both of which acts it is recited, that it was apprehended there was not sufficient corn in the kingdom for the food of the inhabitants until the harvest.

On this last act a new controversy arose. When the bill was sent to England, the Privy Council there inserted into it a dispensing power in favour of the Crown:—the king might by his simple order in council permit the exportation of grain or flour, any thing in the act contained to the contrary notwithstanding. The Patriots vainly resisted this alteration; they alleged that even under the restrictions of Poyning’s Law, the King had only power to assent or dissent; not a power of alteration, which from its nature imports a deliberative power that could not exist save in the Lords and Commons of Ireland. All resistance, however, was unavailing, and the bill was passed as altered.

Lord Hartford had not on this occasion asserted the prerogative and served the English interests so zealously as had been expected



of him. Therefore he was recalled ; and after a short *interregnum* under lords-justices (for the last time), Lord Townshend was sent to Ireland, in October, 1767.

This nobleman was selected to introduce a very important change in the system of governing Ireland. In order to attempt the arduous task of supplanting the deep rooted influence of the Irish oligarchy, it was requisite that the Lord Lieutenant, to whom that power was to be transferred, should be endowed with those qualities that were most likely to ingratiate him with the Irish nation. The new Lord Lieutenant excelled all his predecessors in that convivial ease, pleasantry, and humour, so highly prized by the Irish of every description. The majority which had been so dearly bought in the Commons, by those who had heretofore had the management of the *English interest*, was now found not altogether so tractable as it had heretofore been. There were three or four grandees who had such an influence in the House of Commons, that their coalition would, at any time, give them a clear majority upon any question. To gain these had been the chief anxiety of former governors ; they were sure to bring over a proportionate number of dependants, and it had been the unguarded maxim to permit subordinate graces and favours to flow from, or through the hands of these leaders.\* Formerly these principals used to stipulate with each new Lord Lieutenant, whose office was biennial, and residence but for six months, upon what terms they would carry the King's business through the House ; so that they might not improperly be called *undertakers*. They provided, that the disposal of all Court favours, whether places, pensions, or preferments, should pass through their hands, in order to keep their suite in an absolute state of dependence upon themselves. All applications were made by the leader, who claimed as a right, the privilege of gratifying his friends in proportion to their numbers. Whenever such demands were not complied with, then were the measures of Government sure to be crossed and obstructed ; and the Session of Parliament became a constant struggle for power between the heads of parties, who used to force themselves into the office of Lord-Justice according to the prevalence of their interest. This evil had been seen and lamented by Lord Chesterfield, and his resolution and preparatory steps for undermining it probably contributed not a little to his immediate recall, upon the cessation of the danger, which his wisdom was thought alone competent to avert.

This was the system which Lord Clare said, "The Government

\* Phil. Surv., p. 57.

of England at length opened their eyes to the defects and dangers of; they shook the power of the aristocracy, but were unable to break it down."

The primary object of Lord Townshend's administration was to break up the monopolising system of this oligarchy. He in part succeeded, but by means ruinous to the country. The subalterns were not to be detached from their chiefs, but by similar though more powerful means than those by which they had enlisted under their banners. The streams of favour became not only multiplied, but enlarged. Every individual now looked up directly to the fountain head, and claimed and received more copious draughts. Thus, under colour of destroying an overgrown aristocratic power, all Parliamentary independence was completely destroyed by Government. The innovation naturally provoked the deserted few to resentment. They took refuge under the shelter of patriotism, and they inveighed with less effect against the venality of the system, merely because it had taken a new direction, and was somewhat enlarged. The bulk of the nation, and some, though very few of their representatives in Parliament, were earnest, firm, and implacable against it.

The arduous task which Lord Townshend had assumed was not to be effected by a *coup de main*: forces so engaged, so marshalled, and so commanding rather than commanded, as he found the Irish Parliament, were not to be dislodged by a sudden charge; regular, gradual, and cautious approaches were to be made; it was requisite that the chief governor should first be popular, and then powerful, before he could be efficient and successful. His lordship, therefore, to those convivial fascinations, to which Irish society was so sensible, superadded as many personal favours, as the fiscal stores could even promise to answer, which in a people of quick and warm sensibility creates a something very like momentary gratitude; and in order the more completely to seat himself in that effective power, which was requisite for his purpose, he judiciously fixed upon a favourite object of the wishes and attempts of the "Patriots" to sanction with his countenance and support.

This was the long-wished-for Septennial Bill.

Dr. Lucas had several times failed in his endeavours to procure a bill for limiting the duration of Parliament. Now, however, a Septennial Bill was transmitted, and was returned with an alteration in point of time, having been changed into an Octennial one. There appears to have been some unfair manœuvring in the British Cabinet, in order by a side wind to deprive the Irish of that, which they dared not openly refuse them. At the same

time a transmission was made of another popular bill for the independence of the judges, in which they had also inserted some alteration. It was expected that the violent tenaciousness of the Irish Commons for the privilege of not having their heads of bills altered by the English ministers, would have induced them to reject any bill, into which such an alteration had been introduced. In this the English Cabinet was deceived: the Irish Commons waived the objection as to the Limitation Bill, in order to make sure at last of what they had so long tried in vain to procure, but objected on this very account to the judges' bill, which was transmitted at the same time with alterations; for although this latter bill had been particularly recommended in the speech of the Lord Lieutenant, it was, on account of an alteration inserted in it in England, unanimously rejected.

No sooner was the Octennial Bill returned, than the Commons voted a respectful and grateful address to the throne, beseeching his Majesty to accept their unfeigned and grateful acknowledgments for the condescension, so signally manifested to his subjects of that kingdom, in returning the bill for limiting the duration of Parliaments, which they considered not only as a gracious mark of paternal benevolence, but as a wise result of royal deliberation. And when the royal assent had been given, the action was so grateful to the people, that they took the horses from the Viceroy's coach, and drew him from the Parliament House with the most enthusiastic raptures of applause and exultation. But his lordship's popularity did not last long. By diverting the channel of favour, or rather by dividing it into a multitude of little streams, the gentlemen of the House of Commons were taught to look up to him, not only as the source, but as the dispenser of every gratification. Not even a commission in the revenue, worth above £40 a-year, could be disposed of, without his approbation. Thus were the old undertakers given to understand, that there was another way of doing business than through them. It was not, however, without much violence on both sides, that he at length effected his purpose. The immediate sufferers did not fail to call this alteration in the system of governing, an innovation, which they artfully taught the people to resent as a national grievance.

It will be seen that although the "Patriots" had now gained their famous measure, not indeed as a Septennial, but at least as an Octennial Bill, which was to have been a panacea for all the evils of the State; its effects were far from answering their expectations. Extravagance and corruption still grew and spread under Lord Townshend's administration. Proprietors of boroughs

found their property much enhanced in value, because there was a market for it every eight years. The reflections of Thomas MacNevin on this subject are very just:—"Some doubts arose as to the benefits produced by this bill in the way designed by its framers; but no one doubted that the spirit discovered by the "Patriot" party in the House produced effects at the time and somewhat later, which cannot be overstated or overvalued. It may, indeed, be doubted whether any measure, however beneficial in itself, could in those days of venality and oppression, with a constitution so full of blemishes, and a spirit of intolerance influencing the best and ablest men of the day, such as Lucas for example, could be productive of any striking or permanent advantage. We must not be astonished then that the Octennial Bill was found incommensurate with the expectations of the "Patriots," who might have looked for the reasons of this and similar disappointments in their own venality, intolerance, fickleness, and shortcomings, if they had chosen to reflect on themselves and their motives. The real advantages are to be found in the principles propounded and the spirit displayed in the debates.\*

In short, no mere reforms in Parliamentary elections or procedure could avail to create in this English colony, either a national spirit or national proportions, or to stay the corruption and venality so carefully organized by English governors for the express purpose of keeping it down, so long as the colony did not associate with itself the multitudinous masses of the Catholic people—so long as half a million had to hold down and coerce over two millions of disarmed and disfranchised people, and at the same time to contend with the insolence and rapacity of Great Britain. Nationality in Ireland was necessarily fated to be delusive and evanescent.

"So long as Ireland did pretend,  
Like sugar-loaf turned upside down  
To stand upon its smaller end."†

In the year 1767, the whole population of the island was estimated, or in part calculated, at 2,544,276, and of these less than half a million were Protestants of the two sects.

It must however, be acknowledged that in this oppressive minority there began to be developed a very strong political vitality, chiefly owing to the strong personal interest which every one

\* MacNevin's *History of the Volunteers*.

† Moore. *Memoir of Captain Rock*.



had in public affairs, and to the spread of political information, through newspapers and pamphlets, and the very able speeches which now began to give the Irish Parliament a just celebrity. Dr. Lucas conducted the *Freeman's Journal*, which was established very soon after the accession of George III. This journal was soon followed by another called the *Hibernian Journal*. Flood, Hussey, Burgh, Yelverton, and above all, Grattan contributed to these papers. In the administration of Lord Townshend appeared the *Dublin Mercury*, a satirical sheet avowedly patronized by Government. It was intended to turn "Patriots" and "Patriotism" into ridicule; but the Government had not all the laughers on its side.

A witty warfare was carried on against Lord Townshend in a collection of letters on the affairs and history of Baratania, by which was intended Ireland. The letters of Posthumus and Pericles, and the dedication, were written by Henry Grattan, at the time of the publication a very young man. The principal papers, and all the history of Baratania, the latter being an account of Lord Townshend's administration, his protest, and his prorogation, were the composition of Sir Hercules Langrishe. Two of his witticisms are still remembered, as being, in fact, short essays on the politics of Ireland. Riding in the park with the Lord Lieutenant, his excellency complained of his predecessors having left it so damp and marshy; Sir Hercules observed, "they were too much engaged in *draining* the rest of the kingdom." Being asked where was the best and truest history of Ireland to be found? he answered: "In the continuation of *Rapin*."

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## CHAPTER XV.

1762—1767.

CONTEMPORANEOUSLY with the Parliamentary struggles for the Octennial Act, and for arresting, if possible, the public extravagance and corruption, there was going on in an obscure parish of Tipperary, one of those dark transactions which were so common in Ireland during all this century as to excite no attention, and leave scarcely a record—the judicial murder of Father Nicholas Sheehy. His story is a true and striking epitome of the history of the Catholic nation in those days, and the notoriety of the facts at the time, and the character of the principal victim, have caused the full details to be handed down to us, minutely and with the clearest evidence.

The bitter distresses of the people of Munster, occasioned by rack-rents, by the merciless exactions of the established clergy and their tithe-proctors, and by the enclosure of commons, had gone on increasing and growing more intense from the year 1760, until despair and misery drove the people into secret associations, and in 1762, as we have seen, the Whiteboys had in some places broken out into unconnected riots to pull down the fences that enclosed their commons, or to resist the collection of church-rates. These disturbances were greatly exaggerated in the reports made to Government by the neighbouring Protestant proprietors, squires of the Cromwellian brood, who represented that wretched *Jacquerie* as nothing less than a Popish rebellion, instigated by France, supported by French money, and designed to bring in the Pretender.

The village of Clogheen lies in the valley between the Galtees and the range of Knockmaoldown, in Tipperary, near the borders of Waterford and of Cork counties. Its Parish Priest was the Reverend Nicholas Sheehy: he was of a good Irish family, and well educated, having, as usual at that period, gone to France—contrary to “law”—for the instruction denied him at home. On the Continent he had probably mingled much with the high-spirited Irish exiles, who made the name of Ireland famous in all the courts and camps of Europe, and on his perilous return (for that too was against the law), to engage in the labours of his still more perilous mission, his soul was stirred within him at the sight of the degradation and abject wretchedness of the once proud clans of the south. With a noble imprudence, which the moderate Dr. Curry terms “a quixotic cast of mind towards relieving all those within his district whom he fancied to be injured or oppressed;” he spoke out against some of the enormities which he daily witnessed. In the neighbouring parish of Newcastle, where there were no Protestant parishioners, he had ventured to say that there should be no church-rates, and the people had refused to pay them. About the same time, the tithes of two Protestant clergymen in the vicinity of Ballyporeen, Messrs. Foulkes and Sutton, were farmed to a tithe-proctor of the name of Dobbyn. This proctor forthwith instituted a new claim upon the Catholic people of his district, of five shillings for every marriage celebrated by a priest.\* This new impost was resisted by the people, and as it fell heavily on the parishioners of Mr. Sheehy, he denounced it

\* These details and a great mass of others bearing on the case of Mr. Sheehy, are given by Dr. Madden in his First Series (United Irishmen). He has carefully sifted the whole of the proceedings, and thrown much light upon them.

publicly; in fact he did not even conceal that he questioned altogether the divine right of a clergy to the tenth part of the produce of a half-starved people, of whose souls they had no cure. How these doctrines were relished by the Cromwellian magistrates and Anglican rectors in his neighbourhood, may well be conceived. It was not to be tolerated that the Catholic people should begin to suppose that they had any rights. The legislation of the Ascendency had strictly provided that there should be no Catholic lawyers; it had also carefully prohibited education; nothing had been omitted to stifle within the hearts of the peasantry every sentiment of human dignity, and when they found that here was a man amongst the peasantry who could both read and write, and who could tell them how human beings lived in other lands, and what freedom and right were, it is not to be wondered at that his powerful neighbours resolved they would have his blood.

When in 1762, the troubles in the south were first supposed to call for military coercion, it was precisely in this village of Clogheen that the Marquis of Drogheda, commanding a considerable military force, fixed his head-quarters. On that same night an assemblage of Whiteboys took place in the neighbourhood, with the intention as was believed, of attacking the town, but a clergyman named Doyle, Parish Priest of Ardfinnan, on learning of their intention (as one of the informers states in his depositions), went amongst them and succeeded in preventing any offensive movement. His purpose, however, in so doing was as usual represented to be insidious.

From this time the Earl of Drogheda made several incursions into the adjacent country, "and great numbers of the insurgents," as we are informed by Sir Richard Musgrave, "were killed by his lordship's regiment, and French money was found in the pockets of some of them." We are not informed what the "insurgents" were doing when they were killed, nor in what this insurrection consisted, but we may here present the judgment of Edmund Burke upon those transactions:—"I was three times in Ireland, from the year 1760 to the year 1767, where I had sufficient means of information concerning the inhuman proceedings (among which were many cruel murders, besides an infinity of outrages and oppressions unknown before in a civilized age) which prevailed during that period, in consequence of a pretended conspiracy among Roman Catholics against the King's Government." In short, there was no such conspiracy, and if the statement of Sir Richard Musgrave be true, which is highly improbable, that any coins of French money were found in the pockets of the slain, "that may be accounted for," says Mr. Matthew O'Connor, "as



the natural result of a smuggling intercourse with France, and in particular of the clandestine export of wool to that country.”\*

While the troops were established at Clogheen they were constantly employed in this well-known method of pacifying the country, and they were seconded with sanguinary zeal by several neighbouring gentlemen, especially Sir Thomas Maude, William Bagnell, and John Bagnell, Esquires; many arrests were made as well as murders committed, and active preparation was made for what in Ireland is called “trial” of those offenders—that is indictment before juries of their mortal enemies. Diligent in the arrangement of the panels for these trials, we find Daniel Toler, High Sheriff of the county, who was either father or uncle of that other Toler, the bloody judge, afterwards known under the execrated title of Norbury.

Amidst all this we are not to suppose that Father Sheehy was forgotten. In the course of the disturbances he was several times arrested, indicted, and even tried as a “Popish priest,” not being duly registered, or not having taken the abjuration oath: but so privately did the priests celebrate Mass in those days that it was found impossible to procure any evidence against him. We find also that he was indicted at Clonmel assizes, in 1763, as having been present at a Whiteboy assemblage, and as having forced one Ross to swear that he never would testify against Whiteboys. At this same assizes, a true bill was found against Michael Quinlan, a Popish priest, for having at Aughnacarty and other places, exercised the office and functions of a Popish priest, against the peace of our lord the King and the Statute, &c. To make conviction doubly sure, as in Sheehy’s case, a second information was sent up on the same occasion, charging Father Quinlan with a riotous assemblage at Aughnacarty, so that if it was not a riot it was a mass, and if it was not a mass it was a riot—criminal in either case.

It is needless to state the details of all these multifarious legal proceedings extending through several years. To pursue the story of Father Sheehy: he was acquitted on the charge of being a Popish priest, “to his own great misfortune,” says poor Dr. Curry, “for had he been convicted, his punishment, which would be only transportation, might have prevented his ignominious death, which soon after followed.” Can there be conceived a more touching illustration of the abject situation of the Catholics, than that such should be the reflection which suggested itself on such an occasion to the worthy Dr. Curry.

\* M. O’Connor, *History of the Irish Catholics*.



It also deserves to be noted in passing, that no public man in Ireland was more ferocious in denouncing the unhappy Whiteboys and calling for their blood, than the celebrated Patriot, Henry Flood. On the 13th of October, 1763, in moving for an instruction to the committee to inquire into the causes of the "insurrections" (which he would have to be a Popish rebellion and nothing less), he expressed his amazement that the indictments in the south were only laid for a riot and breach of the peace, and animadverted severely on the lenient conduct of the judges. The Solicitor-General had actually to modify the wrath of the bloodthirsty Patriot, and to assure him "that whenever lenity had been shown, it was only where reason and humanity required it,"\* which we may be very sure was true.

But whosoever might be allowed to escape, that lot was not reserved for Father Sheehy.† For two whole years, while the gibbets were groaning and the jails bursting with his poor parishioners, he was enabled to baffle all prosecution; sometimes escaping out of the very toils of the Attorney-General by default of evidence, sometimes concealing himself in the glens of the mountains, until in the year 1765 the Government was prevailed upon by his powerful enemies to issue a proclamation against him, as a person guilty of high treason, offering a reward of three hundred pounds for taking him, which Sheehy in his retreat happening to hear of, immediately wrote up to Secretary Waite, "that as he was not conscious of any such crime, as he was charged with in the proclamation, he was ready to save to the Government the money offered for taking him, by surrendering himself out of hand, to be tried for that or any other crime he might be accused of; not at Clonmel, where he feared that the power and malice of his enemies were too prevalent for justice (as they soon after indeed proved to be), but at the Court of King's Bench in Dublin." His proposal having been accepted, he was accordingly brought up to Dublin, and tried there for rebellion, of which, however, after a severe scrutiny of fourteen hours, he was again acquitted; no evidence having appeared against him but a blackguard boy, a common prostitute, and an impeached thief, all brought out of Clonmel Jail, and bribed for the purpose of witnessing against him.

But his inveterate enemies, who, like so many bloodhounds, had pursued him to Dublin, finding themselves disappointed there,

\* "Irish Debates." Year 1763.

† The remainder of the story of Father Sheehy is substantially the narrative of Curry.

resolved upon his destruction at all events. One Bridge, an infamous informer against some of those who had been executed for these riots, was said to have been murdered by their associates, in revenge (although his body could never be found),\* and a considerable reward was offered for discovering and convicting the murderer. Sheehy, immediately after his acquittal in Dublin for rebellion, was indicted by his pursuers for this murder, and notwithstanding the promise given him by those in office on surrendering himself, he was transmitted to Clonmel, to be tried there for this new crime, and, upon the sole evidence of the same infamous witnesses, whose testimony had been so justly reprobated in Dublin, was there condemned to be hanged and quartered for the murder of a man who was never murdered at all.

What barefaced injustice and inhumanity were shown to this unfortunate man on that occasion,† is known and testified by many thousands of credible persons, who were present and eye-witnesses on the day of his trial. A party of horse surrounded the court, admitting and excluding whomsoever they thought proper, while others of them, with Sir Thomas Maude at their head, scampered the streets in a formidable manner, breaking into inns and private lodgings in the town, challenging and question-

\* It was positively sworn, by two unexceptionable witnesses, that he privately left the kingdom some short time before he was said to have been murdered. See Notes of the Trial taken by one of the Jury, in *Ershaw's Magazine* for June, 1766.

† To mention only one instance out of many. During his trial, Mr. Keating, a person of known property and credit in that country, having given the clearest and fullest evidence, that, during the whole night of the supposed murder of Bridge, the prisoner, Nicholas Sheehy, had lain in his house, that he could not have left it in the night-time without his knowledge, and consequently that he could not have been even present at the murder; the Reverend Mr. Hewetson, an active manager in these trials, stood up, and after looking on a paper that he held in his hand, informed the court that he had Mr. Keating's name on his list as one of those that were concerned in the killing of a corporal and sergeant, in a former rescue of some of these levellers. Upon which he was immediately hurried away to Kilkenny Jail, where he lay for some time, loaded with irons, in a dark and loathsome dungeon: by this proceeding, not only his evidence was rendered useless to Sheehy, but also that of many others was prevented, who came on purpose to testify the same thing, but instantly withdrew themselves, for fear of meeting with the same treatment. Mr. Keating was afterwards tried for this pretended murder at the assizes of Kilkenny, but was honourably acquitted; too late, however, to be of any service to poor Sheehy, who was hanged and quartered some time before Mr. Keating's acquittal. The very same evidence which was looked upon at Clonmel as good and sufficient to condemn Mr. Sheehy, having been afterwards rejected at Kilkenny, as prevaricating and contradictory with respect to Mr. Keating.

ing all new-comers, menacing the prisoners' friends, and encouraging his enemies : even after sentence of death was pronounced against him (which one would think might have satisfied the malice of his enemies), his attorney found it necessary for his safety, to steal out of the town by night, and with all possible speed make his escape to Dublin. The head of the brave murdered priest was spiked over the gates of Clonmel Jail, and there remained twenty years. At last his sister was allowed to bury it where his body lies, in the old churchyard of Shandraghan.

The night before his execution, which was but the second after his sentence, he wrote a letter to Major Sirr, wherein he declared his innocence of the crime for which he was next day to suffer death ; and on the morning of that day, just before he was brought forth to execution, he, in the presence of the sub-sheriff and a clergyman who attended him, again declared his innocence of the murder ; solemnly protesting at the same time, as he was a dying man, just going to appear before the most awful of tribunals, that he never had engaged any of the rioters in the service of the French king, by tendering them oaths, or otherwise ; that he never had distributed money among them on that account, nor had ever received money from France, or any other foreign court, either directly or indirectly, for any such purpose ; that he never knew of any French or other foreign officers being among these rioters ; or of any Roman Catholics of property or note, being concerned with them. At the place of execution he solemnly averred the same things, adding, "that he never heard an oath of allegiance to any foreign prince proposed or administered in his lifetime ; nor ever knew anything of the murder of Bridge, until he heard it publicly talked of ; nor did he know that there ever was any such design on foot."

Everybody knew, that this clergyman might, if he pleased, have easily made his escape to France, when he first heard of the proclamation for apprehending him ; and as he was all along accused of having been agent for the French king, in raising and fomenting these tumults, he could not doubt of finding a safe retreat, and suitable recompense for such services, in any part of that kingdom. It seems, therefore, absurd in the highest degree, to imagine that he, or any man, being at the same time conscious of the complicated guilt of rebellion and murder, would have wilfully neglected the double opportunity of escaping punishment and of living at his ease and safety in another kingdom ; or that any person, so criminally circumstanced as he was thought to be, would have at all surrendered himself to a public trial, without friends, money, or family connections ; and, above all, without



that consciousness of his innocence, on which, and the protection of the Almighty, he might possibly have relied for his deliverance.

Emboldened by this success, Sir Thomas Maude published an advertisement, somewhat in the nature of a manifesto, wherein, after having presumed to censure the administration for not punishing, with greater and unjustifiable severity, these wretched rioters, he named a certain day, on which the following persons of credit and substance in that country, viz. :—Edmund Sheehy, James Buxton, James Farrel, and others, were to be tried by commission at Clonmel, as principals or accomplices in the aforesaid murder of Bridge. And, as if he meant by dint of numbers, to intimidate even the judges into lawless rigour and severity, he sent forth a sort of authoritative summons “to every gentleman in the county to attend that commission.” His summons was punctually obeyed by his numerous and powerful adherents; and these men, innocent (as will appear hereafter), were sentenced to be hanged and quartered by that commission.

It will naturally be asked, upon what new evidence\* this sentence was passed, as it may well be supposed, that no use was made of the former reprobated witnesses on this occasion. But use *was* made of them, and a principal use too, in the trial and

\* James Prendergast, Esq., a witness for Mr. Edmund Sheehy, perfectly unexceptionable in point of fortune, character, and religion, which was that of the Established Church, deposed, that on the day and hour on which the murder of Bridge was sworn to have been committed, viz. :—“About or between the hours of ten and eleven o’clock, on the night of the 28th of Oct., 1764, Edmund Sheehy, the prisoner, was with him and others, in a distant part of the country; that they and their wives had, on the aforesaid 28th of October, dined at the house of Mr. Tenison, near Ardfinan, in the county of Tipperary, where they continued until after supper; that it was about eleven o’clock when he and the prisoner left the house of Mr. Tenison, and rode a considerable way together on their return to their respective homes; that the prisoner had his wife behind him; that when he (Mr. Prendergast) got home, he looked at the clock, and found it was the hour of twelve o’clock exactly.” This testimony was confirmed by several corroborating circumstances, sworn to by two other witnesses, against whom no exception appears to have been taken. And yet, because Mr. Tenison, although he confessed in his deposition, that the prisoner had dined with him in October, 1764, and does not expressly deny that it was on the 28th of that month; but says, conjecturally that he was *inclined to think* that it was earlier than the 28th, the prisoner was brought in guilty. Thus positive and particular proof, produced by Mr. Prendergast, with the circumstances of the day and the hour, attested upon oath by two other witnesses, whose veracity seems not to have been questioned, was overruled and set aside by the vague and indeterminate surmise of Mr. Tenison. See *Ershaw’s Gentleman’s and London Magazine*, for April, and June, 1766.



conviction of these devoted men. The managers, however, for the Crown, as they impudently called themselves, being afraid, or ashamed, to trust the success of their sanguinary purposes to the now enfeebled, because generally exploded, testimony of these miscreants, looked out for certain props, under the name of *approvers*, to strengthen and support their tottering evidence. These they soon found in the persons of Herbert and Bier, two prisoners, accused, like the rest, of the murder of Bridge; and who, though absolutely strangers to it (as they themselves had often sworn in the jail), were nevertheless in equal danger of being hanged for it, if they did not purchase their pardon by becoming approvers of the former false witnesses. Herbert was so conscious of his innocence in respect to Bridge's murder, that he had come to the Assizes of Clonmel, in order to give evidence in favour of the priest Sheehy; but his arrival and business being soon made known, effectual measures were taken to prevent his giving such evidence. Accordingly bills of high treason were found against him, upon the information of one of these roprobate witnesses, and a party of light horse sent to take him prisoner. Bier, upon his removal afterwards to Newgate, in Dublin, declared, in a dangerous fit of sickness, to the ordinary of that prison, with evident marks of sincere repentance, "that for any thing he knew to the contrary, the before-mentioned Edmund Sheehy, James Buxton, and James Farrel, were entirely innocent of the fact for which they had suffered death; and that nothing in this world, but the preservation of his own life, which he saw was in the most imminent danger, should have tempted him to be guilty of the complicated crimes of perjury and murder, as he then confessed he was, when he swore away the lives of those innocent men."

On Saturday morning, May 3rd, 1766, the convicts were hanged and quartered at Clogheen. Their behaviour at the place of execution was cheerful, but devout; not content to forgive, they prayed for and blessed their prosecutors, judges, and juries. After they were tied up, each of them, in his turn, read a paper aloud, without tremor, hesitation, or other visible emotion, wherein they solemnly protested, as dying Christians, who were quickly to appear before the judgment-seat of God, "that they had no share either by act, counsel, or knowledge in the murder of Bridge; that they never heard an oath of allegiance to any foreign prince proposed or administered amongst them; that they never heard that any scheme of rebellion, high treason, or a massacre, was intended, offered, or even thought of, by any of them; that they never knew of any commissions, or French or Spanish officers

being sent, or of any money being paid to these rioters. After this, they severally declared, in the same solemn manner, that certain gentlemen, whose names they then mentioned, had tampered with them at different times, pressing them to make, what they called useful discoveries, by giving in examinations against numbers of Roman Catholics of fortune in that province (some of whom they particularly named) as actually concerned in a conspiracy, and intended massacre, which were never once thought of. But above all, that they urged them to swear, that the priest, Nicholas Sheehy, died with a lie in his mouth; without doing which, they said, no other discovery would avail them. Upon these conditions, they promised, and undertook to procure their pardons, acquainting them at the same time, that they should certainly be hanged, if they did not comply with them."

All that has since come to light with regard to these black transactions—the testimony of Burke (already cited) that there was no conspiracy for insurrection at all—the failure to produce the body of Bridge, though it was carefully searched for in the field where a witness swore it had been buried—the hatred notoriously cherished against Father Sheehy and all his friends, on account of his bold conduct in standing up for his poor parishioners—and we must add the whole course of Irish "justice" from that day to this—all compel us to credit the dying declaration of these men, who were also of unblemished character; and force us to the conclusion that the whole of these military executions and judicial trials in Munster, extending over four years, were themselves the result of a most foul conspiracy on the part of the "Ascendancy" faction, with its Government, its judges, its magistrates, and its juries—based upon carefully organized perjury and carried through by brute force, to "strike terror" in Tipperary (a measure often found needful since), to destroy all the leading Catholics of that troublesome neighbourhood; and above and before all things, to hang and quarter the body, and to spike the head, of the generous and kindly priest who told his people that they were human beings and had rights and wrongs.

Dr. Curry winds up his account of the transaction with these reflections:—

"Such, during the space of three or four years, was the fearful and pitiable state of the Roman Catholics of Munster, and so general did the panic at length become, so many of the lower sort were already hanged, in jail, or on the informers' lists, that the greatest part of the rest fled through fear; so that the land lay untilled, for want of hands to cultivate it, and a famine was with reason apprehended. As for the better sort, who had

something to lose (and who, for that reason, were the persons chiefly aimed at by the managers of the prosecution), they were at the utmost loss how to dispose of themselves. If they left the country, their absence was construed into a proof of their guilt : if they remained in it, they were in imminent danger of having their lives sworn away by informers and approvers ; for the suborning and corrupting of witnesses on that occasion, was frequent and barefaced, to a degree almost beyond belief. The very stewes were raked, and the jails rummaged in search of evidence ; and the most notoriously profligate in both were selected and tampered with, to give information of the private transactions and designs of reputable men, with whom they never had any dealing, intercourse, or acquaintance ; nay, to whose very persons they were often found to be strangers, when confronted at their trial.

“ In short, so exactly did these prosecutions in Ireland resemble, in every particular, those which were formerly set on foot in England, for that villanous fiction of Oates’s plot, that the former seem to have been planned and carried on entirely on the model of the latter ; and the same just observation that hath been made on the English sanguinary proceedings, is perfectly applicable to those which I have now, in part, related, viz. : ‘that for the credit of the nation, it were indeed better to bury them in eternal oblivion, but that it is necessary to perpetuate the remembrance of them, as well to maintain the truth of history, as to warn, if possible, our posterity, and all mankind, never again to fall into so shameful and so barbarous a delusion.’ ”

All now seemed quiet in Munster ; but it was the quietude of despair and exhaustion. The Whiteboy spirit was not really suppressed, because the oppressions which had occasioned it were not relaxed, but rather aggravated. Many hearts were now cold that had been the centre of a humble family circle four years before ; and the surviving parishioners of Clogheen, when they saw the blackening skull of their revered priest upon its spike withering away in the wind, could read the fate that, on the first murmur of revolt, was in store for themselves or any who should take their part. The next year (1767), some further arrests were made, and the Ascendency party tried hard to get up an alarm about another “ Popish rebellion.” No executions followed on this occasion, as several benevolent persons contributed money to procure the prisoners the benefit of the best legal defence. It is with pleasure one reads among the names of the friends of an oppressed race who contributed to this fund, the name of Edmund Burke. One of the persons arrested on this last occasion, but



afterwards discharged without trial, was Dr. McKenna Catholic Bishop of Cloyne. He, as well as all other ecclesiastics of his order, was, of course, at all times subject to the penalties of law, to transportation under the acts "for preventing the growth of Popery" in Queen Anne's time; and also to the penalty of *premunire* under earlier laws: yet these bishops continued to exercise their office, to confirm and confer orders under a species of connivance, which passed for toleration. But their situation, as well as that of all their clergy, in these first years of King George III. was still as precarious and anomalous as it had been during all the reign of George II. Sometimes they were tolerated, sometimes persecuted. It depended upon the administration which happened to be in power; upon the temporary alarms to which the "Ascendency" was always subject; and upon the disposition of local proprietors and magistrates, who were occasionally men of liberal education, and relished the society of the neighbouring priests who had graduated at Lisbon, or Salamanca, or Louvain, and who were then frequently far superior in cultivation and social refinement to the Protestant rectors, of whom Dean Swift sometimes betrays his low estimate. Even the regular clergy, although the rage and suspicion of the "Ascendency" were yet more bitter against them than the secular priests, were always to be found in Ireland. They ran more cruel risks, however, than the parish priest. If any blind or self-interested bigot desired to show his zeal in trampling on the right of conscience, or to raise the ferocious old cry of "No Popery!" the regular clergy formed an inexhaustible subject for his vociferations: if the Legislature of the day wished to indulge the popular frenzy by the exhibition of new-fashioned enactments, or of a new series of tragedies—monks, Jesuits, and friars were sure to pay the cost of the entertainment. It has often been affirmed, even by the timid Catholic writers of the last century, that the accession of the House of Hanover inaugurated an era of more liberal toleration. It is to be feared that this kind of admission on their part was but a courtly device to conciliate, if not to flatter, that odious House and its partisans; for the priest-hunters were never more active than in the reign of George I. when Garcia brought in his batches of captured clergymen, and received a good price out of the treasury upon each head of game. In the whole reign of George II., until the administration of Chesterfield, Catholic worship had to be celebrated with the utmost caution and secrecy. In this reign, Bernard MacMahon, Catholic Primate, "resided in a retired place named Ballymascanlon in the County of Louth; his habitation was little superior to a farmhouse, and



for many years he was known through the country by the name of Mr. Ennis. In this disguise, which personal safety so strongly prompted, he was accustomed to travel over his diocese, make his visitations, exhort his people, and administer the sacraments." \* In the same way, Michael O'Reilly, another primate, "lived in a humble dwelling at Turfegin near Drogheda, and died here about the year 1758," † just two years before the accession of George III. In the reign of George III. himself, we have seen Fathers Sheehy and Quinlan regularly indicted at assizes, for that they had, at such times and places, not having the fear of God before their eyes, but moved and seduced by the instigation of the devil, said Mass and did other functions of a Popish priest, against the peace of our Lord the King, and contrary to the Statutes in that case made and provided. We must, therefore, take these grateful acknowledgments of the liberal dispositions of the House of Hanover, with considerable qualification, remembering that the writers in question were labouring in the cause of Catholic Emancipation, under that royal House, and felt obliged to pay it some compliments upon its noble generosity.

As for the Catholic laity, their disabilities continued all this time in full force, and while a contemptuous connivance was shown to their religious worship, good care was taken to debar them from all profitable occupation, and to seize the poor remnants of their property. Indeed, the toleration of their worship was for the better securing of these latter objects; it was known that men who went regularly to Mass would never take an oath that the King of England is head of the church, or that the Mass is a damnable idolatry; and these oaths formed the very barrier which fenced in all the rich and fat things of the land for the Protestants, and shut the Papists out. That observant and honest English traveller, Arthur Young, was so powerfully struck with this true character of the Penal Laws, that in his account of his tour he more than once dwells upon it with righteous indignation. He says:—"But it seems to be the meaning, wish, and intent of the discovery laws, that none of them (the Irish Catholics) should ever be rich. It is the principle of that system, that wealthy subjects would be nuisances; and therefore every means is taken to reduce, and keep them to a state of poverty. If this is not the intention of these laws, they are the most abominable heap of self-contradictions that ever were issued in the world. They are framed in such a manner that no Catholic shall have the inducement to

\* Brennan's Eccl. Hist., p. 573. † Ib.

become rich. . . . Take the laws and their execution into one view, and this state of the case is so true, that they actually do not seem to be so much levelled at the religion, as at the property that is found in it. . . . The domineering aristocracy of 500,000 Protestants, feel the sweets of having 2,000,000 of slaves ; they have not the least objection to the tenets of that religion which keeps them by the law of the land in subjection ; but property and slavery are too incompatible to live together : hence the special care taken that no such thing should arise among them.” — *Young’s Tour in Ireland*, vol. ii., p. 48.

In another place Mr. Young repeats :—“ I have conversed on the subject with some of the most distinguished characters in the kingdom, and I cannot after all but declare that the scope, purport, and aim of the laws of discovery, as executed, are not against the Catholic religion, *which increases under them*, but against the industry and property of whoever professes that religion. In vain has it been said, that consequence and power follow property, and that the attack is made in order to wound the doctrine through its property, If such was the intention, I reply, that seventy years’ experience prove the folly and futility of it. Those laws have crushed all the industry, and wrested most of the property from the Catholics ; but the religion triumphs ; it is thought to increase.” Readers may now understand the nature and extent of that vaunted “toleration,” and the true intent and purpose of it, such as it was—namely, plunder.

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## CHAPTER XVI.

1767—1773.

THE history of Lord Townshend’s administration, and of the two which followed, is unhappily little more than a history of the most shameless corruption and servility on the part of the Irish Parliament, relieved, however, by some examples of a rising national spirit in the assertion of constitutional right. Very early in the same Session of Parliament, which had finally passed the Octennial Bill, the attention of the House of Commons was especially called to the consideration of the army upon the Irish establishment. A message from the Lord Lieutenant was sent to the House by the hands of the Right Hon. Sir George Macartney, in which he informed the Commons “that it is his Majesty’s judgment, that not less than 12,000 men should be constantly kept in the island for service, and that his Majesty

finding, that, consistently with the general public service, the number before mentioned cannot always be continued in Ireland, unless his army upon the Irish establishment be augmented to 15,235 men in the whole, commissioned and non-commissioned officers included, his Majesty is of opinion, that such augmentation should be immediately made, and earnestly recommends it to his faithful Commons to concur in providing for a measure which his Majesty has extremely at heart as necessary not only for the honour his Crown, but for the peace and security of his kingdom." The message was ordered to be entered on the Journals, and at the same time a committee was appointed to inquire into the state of the military establishment, and also into the application of the money granted for its support from the 25th March, 1751. The result of this inquiry showed manifest misconduct, as appears from the report at large, and the returns thereunto annexed : part of the report is to the following effect :—

"Your committee beg leave to take notice, that the entire reduction of the army, after the conclusion of the peace did not take place till the latter end of the year 1764 ; and that it appears from the return of the quarter-master-general, that there were great deficiencies in the several regiments then upon the establishment, at the several quarterly musters comprised in the said paper, which precede the month of January, 1765 ; the full pay of such vacancies must amount to a very large sum, and ought, as your committee apprehends, to have been returned as a saving to the public, especially as it appeared to your committee, that orders were issued by Government, not to recruit the regiments intended to be reduced." Upon the whole, it was resolved that an address should be presented to his Majesty, to lay before him the report of the said committee, to acknowledge his constant attention to the welfare of the people, to express the utmost confidence in his Majesty's wisdom, that if upon such representation any reformation in the said establishment should appear necessary to his Majesty, such alteration would be made therein as would better provide for the security of the kingdom, and at the same time reduce the expense of the establishment, in such a manner as might be more suitable to the circumstances of the nation. The Government, however was able to secure a majority for their measure. As Mr. Plowden expresses it,—"*Vainly did the efforts of patriotism encounter the exertions of the new system to keep individuals steady to their post on the Treasury bench.*"

The Parliament was now dissolved ; and the first Octennial Parliament was to be elected. There was an unusually long interval of sixteen months from the dissolution of the old to the

meeting of this new Parliament. This interval was used by the Court in Establishing the "new system;" which system was neither more nor less than buying the people's representatives in detail, by direct negotiation with individuals, instead of contracting for them by wholesale with the four or five noble "Undertakers," who owned many boroughs, and influenced the owners of many others. Lord Townshend hoped to render the concession of the Octennial Act worse than nugatory, and to create a new *junta* in support of the *English interest*, independent of their former leaders. But he had not yet so matured his plan as to have insured the whole game. He had not altered the nature, but only raised the price, of accommodation; and, lavish as the Irish have generally been of their voices in Parliament to the highest bidder, there ever appear to have been some cases reserved out of the bargain. Such had been the reservation of right to vote for limited Parliaments, in some of the most obsequious devotees to the measures of the Castle; and such now was a similar exception in some of these pensioned supporters to resist the right of the English Council to make money bills originate with them, and not with the Commons of Ireland. On this point the British Cabinet and the Irish House of Commons came fairly to issue. The former determined to test the question in the most direct way, by the origination of a money bill in the Privy Council; and the latter resolved fairly to meet the issue. Accordingly, it was moved in the House of Commons, that a bill, entitled "An Act for granting to His majesty the several Duties, Rates, Impositions, and Taxes, therein particularly expressed, to be applied to the Payment of the Interest of the Sums therein provided for and towards the Discharge of the said principal Sums," should be read a second time on the day following. This motion was negatived; and it was resolved that such bill was rejected, because it did not take its rise in that House.

The Lord Lieutenant, though he thought proper to allow the Irish Parliament to grant their own money in their own way, protested against the right claimed by the House of Commons, and endeavoured, but in vain, to enter his protest upon their journals. The House would not submit to this encroachment upon their privileges: the Lords were less inflexible, and after much opposition and debate, his excellency's protest was solemnly recorded on the Journals of the House of Peers. But before that was done, it having been generally suspected that such was his intention, the following motion was made in the House of Peers: "That the Speaker of this House be desired that no protest of any person whomsoever, who is not a Lord of Parliament, and a



Member of this House, and which doth not respect a matter which had been previously in question before this House, and wherein the lord protesting had taken part with the minority, either in person or by proxy, be entered on the Journals of the House." After a warm debate upon this motion, the question was negatived upon a division of thirty against five.

The 21st of November, 1769, was a day fixed for the trial of strength upon the English Privy Council's Money Bill. The motion being made that this bill be read a first time, it was carried in the affirmative; and the bill being accordingly read, a motion was made, and the question put, that the bill be read a second time to-morrow morning: the House divided: ayes, sixty-eight; noes, eighty-seven. Then the motion, that the bill be rejected, was put and carried by ninety-four against seventy-one and it was resolved *that the said bill was rejected, because it did not take its rise in that House.* The Lord Lieutenant took this defeat in the Commons so much to heart, that he resolved to bring no more Government questions before them during that Session: or until he could, as the Castle phrase then was, make more sure of the "King's business." The representations which were made of this transaction in England soon found their way into the newspapers, and the light in which Mr. Woodfall placed the majority of the Irish House of Commons on that important division in the *Public Advertiser*, fully proved the general sentiment entertained at the time in England upon the whole system of the Irish Government.\* On the 18th day of December, 1769, a motion was made and carried, without opposition, that a paper entitled the *Public Advertiser*, by H. S. Woodfall, London, December the 9th, 1769, might be read. It contained the following words:—"Hibernian patriotism is a transcript of that filthy idol worshipped at the London Tavern; insolence, assumed from an opinion of impunity, usurps the place which boldness against real injuries ought to hold. The refusal of the late bill, because it was not brought in contrary to the practice of ages, in violation of the constitution, and to the certain ruin of the dependence of Ireland upon Great Britain, is a behaviour more suiting an army of Whiteboys than the grave representatives of a nation. This is the most daring insult that has been offered to Government. It must be counteracted with firmness, or else the State is ruined. Let the refractory House be dissolved; should the next copy their example, let it also be dissolved; and if the same spirit of seditious obstinacy should continue, I know no remedy but one, and it is extremely

obvious. The Parliament of Great Britain is supreme over its conquests, as well as colonies, and the service of the nation must not be left undone, on account of the factious obstinacy of a provincial assembly. Let our Legislature, for they have an undoubted right, vote the Irish supplies; and so save a nation, that their own obstinate representatives endeavour to ruin." The perfect identity in tone and temper of this article with those of the *Times* at the present day (when any manifestation of spirit in Ireland irritates the British public) makes it well worth preserving, to show how very little the English feeling towards Ireland has varied or changed in a hundred years. These paragraphs having been read, it was resolved, that they were a false and infamous libel upon the proceedings of that House, a daring invasion of the Parliament, and calculated to create groundless jealousies between His Majesty's faithful subjects of Great Britain and Ireland: it was therefore ordered, that the said paper should be burnt by the hands of the common hangman. And on the Wednesday following, viz., the 20th of December, the said paper was burned before the gate of the House of Commons by the hands of the common hangman, in the presence of the sheriffs of Dublin, amidst the indignant shouts of an immense crowd of spectators, who loudly, though without outrage, resented the insult offered to their representatives.

It was evident that Lord Townshend's new system of Government had not yet been sufficiently perfected. There was a new assault in preparation during the month of December in this year, 1769, against the enormous pension-list, and although he knew he could command a majority upon that (ninety-eight being against the agitation of the pension-list at that time, and eighty-nine for it), still the majority was too trifling to trust to, and a victory on such terms would have been a moral defeat. He determined to prorogue the House. This became known to the Commons and the country, and the House, in an address, requested that his excellency would inform the House whether he had any instructions or had any intention to prorogue the Parliament sooner than usual. Here again the Lord Lieutenant found his deficiency *in doing the King's business*: for upon a division on the main question, the minister was left once more in a greater minority than ever, there being 106 for his excellency's making the declaration, and seventy-three only against it. On the very next day, however, Sir George Macartney, the secretary, reported to the House, that his excellency had returned the following answer:—

“GENTLEMEN—I shall always be desirous of complying with

your request when I can do it with propriety. I do not think myself authorized to disclose his Majesty's instructions to me upon any subject, without having received his Majesty's commands for so doing. With regard to my intentions, they will be regulated by his Majesty's instructions and *future events*." In fact, on the day after Christmas, Lord Townshend prorogued the Parliament, at first only till the 20th of March following. The Lord Lieutenant having experienced so much inflexibility and difficulty in the management of the Commons in the first session, fully resolved to meet them no more in Parliament, till they were properly marshalled, and thoroughly broken in to every manœuvre of the new tactics. His excellency accordingly by proclamation on the 12th of March, 1770, prorogued them to Tuesday, the 1st of May following; on the 20th of April, 1770, he further prorogued them to the 28th of August, and by three other successive proclamations he further prorogued them to different periods, and finally to the 26th of February, 1771, then to sit for despatch of business. In the mean time affairs were falling into some confusion; several temporary acts which required renewal had expired; the contest in Ireland excited the sympathies of the Whig party in England, and in May, 1770, the Hon. Boyle Walsingham brought up in Parliament at Westminster, the whole subject of the late extraordinary prorogations in Dublin, and moved for papers connected therewith. Lord North, the minister, of course defended the prorogations, which he said he had himself advised; and declared the conduct of the Irish Parliament to be contrary to Poyning's Law, "the grand bond of the dependence of Ireland upon England." The House divided upon the motion for papers, when 66 voted for it, but 178 voted against all inquiry.

Lord Townshend and his creatures were not idle during the long Parliamentary *interregnum*. It is painful to be obliged to record that his system of personal individual corruption made good progress. "Patriots" were won over to the administration, among whom appeared conspicuously, Mr Saxton Perry, Member for Limerick, who first received the support of the Government in being elected as Speaker of the House, with a promise of a peerage. Many others had been secured, some with money, some with honours, and in February, 1771, his excellency faced the Parliament with full confidence, which it soon appeared was not misplaced. The first division was on an address of the Commons to his Majesty in answer to the Lord Lieutenant's speech; in this address they returned their most humble thanks to his Majesty, for graciously continuing his excellency, Lord Townshend, in the Government of the kingdom. The slavish address was opposed,



but was carried by 132 against 107. Lord Townshend never had any further trouble in managing Parliament and doing the "King's business." Mr. Ponsonby, the Speaker of the House, however, refused to be the official medium of presenting the servile address; he resigned at once, requesting the House "to elect another Speaker who may not think such conduct inconsistent with his honour." Mr. Perry was thereupon elected. "And the conduct and speech of Mr. Perry on this occasion bespoke the forward zeal of a new proselyte.\*

Having now secured his majority in Parliament, the grand policy of Lord Townshend was to do away with the effects of the "Patriotic" votes in the last session, and justify his own conduct in the prorogations. He was to make this Irish Parliament stultify itself and eat its own words, and in all this he was eminently successful. Nothing was permitted to pass without a division, so as to parade continually before the eyes of the people of Ireland, and of his employers in England, the thorough training in which the Viceroy had his Parliament at last. The Commons however—that is the remaining "Patriots" in the House—made one last effort, by moving an address to the King, containing some pitiful remonstrances:—as that "his faithful Commons did confidently hope that a law for securing the independence of the judges of this kingdom would have passed; such a law having been recommended and promised by his excellency the Lord Lieutenant, in a speech from the throne in the first Session of his excellency's Government," and several other remonstrances of a like kind. The address was ordered to be opposed, and it was lost by a vote of 123 against 68.

Yet once more the Viceroy's well-drilled ranks were to be paraded. In the address of the Commons to the Lord Lieutenant, which was moved for and carried on the 16th of May, two days only before the prorogation, the "Patriots" objected to the thanks contained in it for his excellency's *just and prudent administration*; but on a division they were outvoted by 106 against 51; this address together with the King's answer to the address of the Commons to the throne, was considered, by the Castle, to have completely counteracted the whole effect of the successful efforts of the "Patriots" in the last session, and to have given the express royal sanction to every part of the Viceroy's conduct.

The address of the Lords to the King contained the following

\* Plowden. It should be remarked that this historian wrote his first series in a spirit favourable to the Union, and, therefore, has some propensity to disparage the "Patriots" of the colony, and to point out their helplessness of venality.



paragraph :—" We have the truest sense of many instances, which, your Majesty has been pleased to afford us of your paternal care and particularly your continuing the Lord Viscount Townshend in the Government of this kingdom, of which, as his experience enables him to form the truest judgment, so his candour and integrity will, we doubt not, move him to make the justest representation." A warm debate took place upon the question being put, that the said paragraph do stand part of the address, which was carried by thirty against fifteen. A manly protest was entered by sixteen peers, whose titles deserve to be recorded. They were—

Leinster (by proxy),	Powerscourt,	Longford,
Westmeath,	Charlemont,	Louth,
Lanesborough,	Baltinglass,	Bective,
Shannon,	Mount-Cashell,	Molesworth,
Mornington,	Moir (by proxy),	Bellamont.
Lisle,		

In this session Lord Townshend proved, by his two-thirds majority on no fewer than seventeen divisions, that he could now make that Parliament vote anything he ordered, whether in matter of opinion or matter of fact. He chose that there should be no Parliamentary inquiry, this time, into finances and pensions, and accordingly there was not. It appears evident, from the arguments of the still uncorrupted "Patriots" of the House of Commons, from the protest of the sixteen peers, from the state of the national accounts still upon record, and from other historical documents, that the national debt of Ireland very heavily accumulated during the administration of Lord Townshend; yet we find, that after the experience, which two years and a quarter had given him of the inadequacy of the fiscal resources of that kingdom to answer his new plan of keeping up the *English interest*, he refrained from calling on the Commons for any supplies, alleging in his speech to Parliament, on the 26th of February, 1771, that with very strict economy, the duties granted last session would be sufficient to answer the expenses of his Majesty's Government; and therefore he would ask no further supply.

The confidence with which Lord Townshend met the Parliament in October, 1771, was strongly displayed in his speech. "My experience," said his excellency, "of your attachment to his Majesty's person, and of your zeal for the public service, affords me the best-grounded hopes, that nothing will be wanting on your part to co-operate with his Majesty's gracious intention, to promote the welfare and happiness of this kingdom, and when

to this consideration I add my remembrance of your kind regard for the ease and honour of my administration, I feel the most sensible pleasure in the present opportunity, which his Majesty has given me, of meeting you a fourth time in Parliament." Notwithstanding his boasted economy, which prevented his application to the Commons for any further supply last session, he now told them "that it was with concern that he must ask a sum of money to discharge the arrears already incurred on his Majesty's establishments, but that they would find they had been unavoidable; for that the strictest economy had been used," &c. Another part of the Lord Lieutenant's speech on the opening of this Parliament, referred to the illegal associations and outrages of the "Hearts-of-Steel," in the north of Ireland. The violence of these people had greatly increased and extended to other counties than those in which the society had first appeared. They exacted oaths by force, maltreated obnoxious individuals, and destroyed houses. Some of them were taken and tried at Carrickfergus; but whether from want of evidence, from fear of incurring the resentment of the populace, or from partiality in the witnesses and the jury, they were acquitted. On this account the Legislature passed an act, by which all persons indicted of such offences were ordered to be tried in counties different from those in which the excesses were committed. In consequence, several of the Steel-Boys against whom examinations had been taken, were carried to Dublin and put upon their trial. But so strong was the prejudice conceived against this new law, that no jury there would find any of them guilty. It will be remembered that these rioters were all Protestants, as were also all the jurors who tried them. If they had been Catholics there would have been no difficulty in vindicating the law. The obnoxious act, however, was repealed, and after that, many convictions and executions took place. The effects, not of the riots, but of the oppressions which produced them, were for a long time prejudicial to the country, and the emigration to America was renewed to a greater extent than ever before.

The Session passed in an unbroken series of servile divisions in favour of every thing the Castle wished; against every thing the Castle disliked. In the address to the King occurred these words, "We are fully persuaded that the support of your Majesty's Government is the great and firm basis of the freedom and happiness of this country." A "Patriot" ventured on an amendment, that before the word *support*, the word *constitutional* should be inserted; it was negatived by a vote of eighty-eight against thirty-six.

During this administration we find by the journals mentioning the tellers upon the different divisions, that three of the most forward and constant supporters of every Government question, were Mr. Monk Mason, Mr. Foster, and Mr. Fitzgibbon; and the truth or falsity of the propositions little availed, provided it were made a Government question. Thus besides the instances already adduced, we find upon the journals (8 vol. iii.) the following resolution negatived on the 8th of March, 1766:—"That it be resolved, that the office of a commissioner of his Majesty's revenue would be better executed by a person resident in this kingdom, than by an absentee." During this session of 1771, died Dr. Lucas, whom, from his first entrance into political life, no promises or offers could seduce from untainted patriotism. The citizens of Dublin erected his statue in the Exchange. The remainder of Lord Townshend's administration passed over without any notable incident. No Legislative measure was adopted either for or against the Catholics, but his lordship could not retire from a situation which he had held in Ireland for five years without giving some proof of his attachment to the Protestant religion.

A provision had been made by the 8th of Anne, that every Popish priest, who should become Protestant, and be approved of as a convert, should have £30 yearly for his maintenance, until provided for by some ecclesiastical preferment beyond that amount. But by an act of this Session it was recited, that it had been found by experience, that the former act had not answered the purposes intended, *especially as the provision made as aforesaid for such Popish priests is in no respect a sufficient encouragement for Popish priests to become converts*; it was therefore enacted, that £40 should in future be allowed annually, in lieu of £30 to every Popish priest converted. The multiplication of these allowances up to the height of the most proselytizing zeal could not interfere with the civil list of pensioners, as these spiritual *douceurs* were to be levied on the inhabitants of the district, wherein the convert last resided. These additional pittance of £10 were called by the Irish, *Townshend's golden drops*. They were not found more efficacious than the former prescription.

This act for the encouragement of converts to the Protestant religion, was also in some measure deemed necessary to counterbalance the effects of another act made in the same session, supposed to be very favourable to the Catholics, and which in times of less liberality had been repeatedly thrown out of Parliament, as tending to encourage Popery to the detriment and prejudice of the Protestant religion. This was *An act to en-*



*courage the reclaiming of unprofitable Bogs*, and recites that there were large tracts of deep bogs in several counties of the kingdom, which in their then state were not only unprofitable, but, by their damps, rendered the air unwholesome; and it had been found by experience, that such bogs were capable of improvement, and of being converted into arable or pasture land, if encouragement were given to the lower class of people to apply their industry to the reclaiming of them. It therefore enacted, that notwithstanding the laws then in force, any Catholic might be at liberty to take a lease of fifty plantation acres of such bog, and one half an acre of arable land adjoining thereto, as a site for a house, or for the purpose of delving for gravel or limestone, for manure, at such rent as should be agreed upon between him and the owner of the soil, as also from ecclesiastical or bodies corporate; and for further encouragement, the tenant was to be free for the first seven years from all tithes and cesses; but it was provided, that if half of the bog demised were not reclaimed at the end of twenty-one years, the lease should be void; and no bog was to be considered unprofitable, unless the depth of it from the surface, when reclaimed, were four feet at least; and no person was to be entitled to the benefit of the act, unless he reclaimed ten plantation acres; and the act was not to extend to any bog within one mile of a city or market town.

The provisions of this act give us a clearer idea than any laboured disquisition could do, of the depressed condition of the Catholics of that day, and of the manner in which they were regarded by the colonists, "Patriots," and all.

Lord Townshend's administration was drawing to a close; and he had done his British errand well. No Viceroy had yet succeeded in establishing in Ireland such profound demoralization and debasement.

The baneful example of the chief governor's marshalling the ranks of Parliament encouraged the already too deeply rooted principle of despotism throughout the nation. Not only the great lords and real owners of land exercised in general a most ferocious rule over their inferiors; but that obnoxious race of self-created gentlemen, whose consequence and virtue consisted in not being Papists, and whose loyalty was mere lust for persecuting and oppressing them, were uncontrollable in their petty tyranny. Even the Lord Lieutenant was so sensible of it, that being resolved to pardon a Catholic gentleman unjustly found guilty, he withdrew the hand of mercy, with this reflection, "I see them resolved upon his blood, so he may as well go now."

In his farewell speech to Parliament, this able British agent



sarcastically complimented the miserable crew, over whom he had so often shaken his whip—"I have upon every occasion endeavoured, to the utmost of my power, to promote the public service, and I feel the most perfect satisfaction in now repeating to you my acknowledgments for the very honourable manner in which (after a residence of near five years amongst you) you have declared your entire approbation of my conduct. Be assured that I shall always entertain the most ardent wishes for your welfare, and shall make a faithful representation to his Majesty of your loyalty and attachment to his royal person and Government."

On the whole, we cannot but acquiesce in the cruel judgment passed upon the Irish Parliament by the worthy Dr. Campbell,\* at the moment when Lord Townshend retired, and gave place to his successor, Lord Harcourt—"Lord Harcourt then found the *Parliament of Ireland as obsequious as that of Great Britain.*" It would be impossible to use a stronger expression.

When Lord Harcourt assumed the government, in October, 1772, he had little to do but to continue the system which his predecessor had with so much perseverance, difficulty, and charge to the finance, regularly established, according to his instructions from the British Cabinet. In order, therefore, to give continuance and stability to the new *English interest*, which had been raised upon the partial destruction of the Irish oligarchy, as Lord Clare observed, a man was chosen of amiable character, easy disposition, and of no other ambition than to move by the direction, and thus acquire the approbation of his immediate employers. With the active labour of office, he considered that he also threw the burden of responsibility upon his secretary. He had been nearly twelve months in the government of Ireland before he met the Parliament, on the 12th of October, 1773.

The first stand made by the "Patriots" was upon an alarm at the intention of Government, in laying the public accounts before the House, to hold back some of the documents which would too palpably bring to light the means used by the last Viceroy for insuring a majority to *do the King's business*. After the House had ordered the different accounts and estimates to be laid before it, an amendment was proposed to add these words:—"As far as there are materials for that purpose." A division took place, and the amendment was carried by 88 against 52. Thus it was left in the discretion of the clerks, or rather of the Government, to bring forward or hold back what materials they chose.

\* "Philosophical Survey of the South of Ireland." This is the work of an honest and liberal man, though not so valuable as the Tour of Arthur Young.

Lord Harcourt's administration is remarkable for the first proposal to impose an absentee tax on non-resident Irish landlords. This proposal came from the Crown; and it was to the effect that a tax of two shillings in the pound should be laid on the net rental of landed property in Ireland, to be paid by all persons who should not reside in that kingdom for six months in each year, from Christmas, 1773, to Christmas, 1775. The proposal, being against the interest of England, was evidently not sincere on the part of Government; all officials were left at perfect liberty to support it or not; the interest of the great landlords was against it; and the only wonder was that it was defeated by so small a majority, 122 against 102.

But we have now arrived at an epoch in the history of the world, from which many things in modern history take their departure. It has been thought needful to go into some detail to show the miserable and abject condition of Ireland at this precise period, in order to make more apparent the wonderful change soon produced by the reflection and reverberation of the great American revolution.

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## CHAPTER XVII.

1774—1777.

THE American "Stamp Act" had been passed in 1765, just while the Irish Parliament was in the midst of its struggle for limited Parliaments, and against the pension list. The next year the Stamp Act had been repealed, but had been soon followed by the attempt to impose "port duties." The steady organized resistance of the Americans had caused the British ministry to relinquish these port duties also, except the duty on tea, in the year 1770. The question between the mother-country and the colonies being thus reduced to a matter of threepence per pound on tea, the colonists being once aroused, having laid down the principle, "No taxation without representation," would not pay that threepence. A year after Lord Harcourt came to Ireland as Viceroy, the people of Boston emptied a cargo of taxed tea into the harbour of that port; and in the course of the following year, 1774, Edmund Burke made one of his first celebrated speeches, in favour of a repeal of the tea duty, in the British Parliament. The motion had been made by Mr. Fuller, member for Rye, but failed, though it was supported by the eloquence of Burke; and the House, we are told, was very much amused and delighted by

the ingenious declamation of that extraordinary orator, while he eulogized his friend, Lord Rockingham and his government, and ridiculed in his peculiar style the present Cabinet—"An administration so checkered and speckled, a piece of joinery so crossly indented and whimsically dovetailed; a Cabinet so variously inlaid, such a piece of diversified mosaic, such a tessellated pavement without cement, here a bit of black stone, there a bit of white," &c. But though there was much laughter and cheering, the motion to repeal the tea duty was lost on a division of 184 against 51. If it be any comfort to us, the fact is certain, that the British Parliament of that day was fully as servile as the Irish, and very much more stupid.

It was evident that the last resort of war had nearly arrived; and the very strong analogies which existed between the American colonies and the Irish colony were quite sufficient to occasion in the latter country not only an intense interest, but a deep sympathy also in the American struggle. The situation of the two countries was not indeed precisely alike. The North American colonies had never pretended to be a kingdom, as the English colony in Ireland did. Ireland was not taxed absolutely without representation, although the dependent position of her Parliament, under Poynings' Law, made her representation quite illusory for any efficient security. The American colonists were then about three millions in number; the Irish, only half a million—for the two millions of Catholics were not counted as members of the body politic. Ireland was within easy reach and striking distance of the common enemy, and America was divided from her by three thousand miles of ocean—no trifling advantage in the days when steam navigation was not. Above all, America had this one great and signal advantage over Ireland, that the colonists, though of different religions, were all equal before the law, and felt themselves equally concerned in the common interest. They were also all armed, and accustomed to the use of weapons, while in Ireland the Penal Laws had effectually disarmed, and reduced to a state of utter helplessness, four-fifths of the entire population.

There was, however quite sufficient resemblance between the cases of the two countries to disquiet Lord North's administration very considerably. The minister, therefore, wisely, though silently, instructed the Lord Lieutenant to endeavour by all means to soothe and engage the affections of the Catholics by gradual relaxations of the rigorous code of penalties, pains, and disabilities, under which they had so long and so patiently suffered. As early, therefore, in the session as the 10th of November,

1773,\* leave was given to bring in the heads of a bill to secure the repayment of money that should be really lent and advanced by Papists to Protestants on mortgages of lands, tenements, and hereditaments; and that it might be understood to be a Government measure of grace, Mr. Mason, Sir Lucius O'Brien, and Mr. Langrishe, great and determined supporters of Government, were ordered to bring it in. † On the preceding day leave had been given to bring in heads of a bill to enable Papists, upon certain terms and provisoes, to take leases of lives, of lands, tenements, and hereditaments; but neither one or the other of these bills at that time proceeded. The Irish antipathies to Popery, and the reluctance of most men in place or power in Ireland to do justice to the Catholics, deterred the easy mind of Lord Harcourt from pushing forward what they persuaded him would create difficulties and disturbances in Parliament, and interrupt that easy and quiet majority which Government then enjoyed, and which he had it strongly in command to keep up by all possible and prudent means. Although the managers of the *English interest* in Ireland (this Lord Lieutenant was but their passive tool) had blasted these two scions of indulgence in their first shoot, yet the British Ministry sent over positive and uncontrollable orders that some act of the Legislature should positively be passed in that Session, of a soothing and conciliatory tendency to the Catholics, well imagining that the breadth of the Atlantic would not prevent the infection of political discontent in persons equally suffering a deprivation of that nutriment and support which their constitution required for the preservation of their existence. On the 5th of March, 1774, therefore, leave was given to bring in a bill to enable his Majesty's subjects, of whatever persuasion, to testify their allegiance to him; and as the bill remitted no part of the then existing code of severity, but accorded merely a permission to the Catholics of expressing their allegiance to their sovereign, which before they had not, it passed both Houses without obstruction or opposition. Of this measure, paltry as it was, and even insulting, when coupled with the rejection of the bills to allow Catholics to take mortgages or leases, Mr. Plowden observes—"It gratified the Catholics, inasmuch as it was a formal recognition that they were subjects, and to this recognition they looked up as to the corner-stone of their future emancipation."

It cannot fail to strike every reader that whatever miserable indulgences, tolerations, or connivances were extended to the Catholics during all the era of the penal laws, were carefully

\* 9 Com. Journ., p. 28.      † Ibid., p. 27.



calculated to prevent them from getting any hold upon the *land*. Thus they were now permitted to testify allegiance if they chose, but could in no case take a mortgage on real estate, because mortgages are often foreclosed, and the mortgagee becomes entitled to the land. They might attend Mass, but could by no means be allowed to have a lease for lives. Mr. Burke, in a letter written in 1775,\* ascribes this policy not so much to the greedy determination of Protestants to own all the wealth of the kingdom, as to mere arrogance and insolence. He says, "From what I have observed, it is pride, arrogance, a spirit of domination, and not a bigoted spirit of religion, that has caused and kept up those oppressive Statutes. I am sure I have known those, who have oppressed Papists in their civil rights, exceedingly indulgent to them in their religious ceremonies; and who wished them to continue, in order to furnish pretences for oppression; and who never saw a man by conforming escape out of their power, but with grudging and regret. I have known men, to whom I am not uncharitable in saying, though they are dead, that they would become Papists in order to oppress Protestants; if being Protestants it was not in their power to oppress Papists." But whosoever has read the narrative of events down to the time at which we are now arrived, will scarcely resist the conclusion that the controlling idea in all the policy of the Ascendency was simple greediness.

Meanwhile the dispute with America was very fast approaching the arbitrament of war. The first general Congress had been opened in Philadelphia on the 4th of September, 1774. All eyes in Ireland were turned to this impending struggle, and the obvious community of interest which Ireland had with those Transatlantic colonies, made their case the theme of conversation in private circles, as well as of debates in Parliament. The attention of the country was still more strongly aroused when the Continental Congress, amongst other forcible addresses issued at this time, directed one to the "People of Ireland."

"We are desirous of the good opinion of the virtuous and humane. We are peculiarly desirous of furnishing you with the true state of our motives and objects; the better to enable you to judge of our conduct with accuracy and determine the merits of the controversy with impartiality and precision. Your Parliament had done us no wrong. You had ever been friendly to the rights of mankind; and we acknowledge with pleasure and gratitude that your nation has produced "Patriots" who have nobly dis-

\* Letter to an Irish Peer.

tinguished themselves in the cause of humanity and America." In fact, most of the leading members of the opposition in both countries (who afterwards composed that administration, which put an end to the American war) opposed the war upon principle; they inveighed against the unconstitutional exactions of the ministry, and in their debates went very little short of formally justifying the American rebellion. The analogy between America and Ireland was too close to pass unnoticed; and the defection of the American Colonies produced strong effects upon Ireland. The exportation of Irish linen for America had been very considerable; but now this great source of national wealth was totally shut up, by an extraordinary stretch of prerogative. Under the pretext of preventing the Americans from being supplied with provisions from this country, an embargo was laid on the exportation of provisions from Ireland, which in prejudicing that kingdom, served only to favour the adventures of British contractors. This embargo, combined with other causes, which were invariable and permanent, produced the most melancholy effects. Wool and black cattle fell considerably in value, as did also land; and rents in many places could scarcely be collected, so much was public credit essentially injured. In short, it was again judged necessary, in presence of these exciting questions with America, "to do something for poor Ireland," as the phrase then ran.

The nature of the benefit, however, was to be considered, and nothing could seem better adopted, than a donation, which would be an advantage instead of a loss to the giver. It was not itself very considerable, but it might be considered as a beginning; and small benefits carry weight with those who have not been habituated to great favours. It had been shown to the British Parliament, that the exports from England to Ireland amounted then to £2,400,000 annually; besides the latter supported a large standing army, at all times ready for the defence of the former; and immense sums of her ready cash were spent in England by her numerous absentees, pensioners, and placemen; yet by oppressive restrictions in trade, Ireland was cut off from the benefit of her great natural staple commodity, as well as excluded from the advantage that she might derive from the peculiarity of her situation.

The British minister on the 11th of October, 1775, moved for a committee of the whole House, to consider of the encouragement proper to be given to the fisheries of Great Britain and Ireland.\* This attention to Ireland was generally approved of,

\* An English minister was always obliged to be extremely cautious in

and after some conversation on the hardships that country suffered, it was proposed by Mr. Burke to extend the motion, by adding the words "trade and commerce;" and thereby afford an opportunity to grant such relief and indulgence in those exports, as might be done without prejudice to Great Britain. The minister objected to this; however, the committee in its progress granted several bounties to the ships of Great Britain and Ireland, for their encouragement in prosecuting the Newfoundland fishery; and it was further resolved in favour of Ireland, that it should be lawful to export from thence, clothes and accoutrements for such regiments on the Irish establishment, as were employed abroad: and also, that a bounty of five shillings per barrel should be allowed on all flax seeds imported into Ireland. This last resolution was passed to prevent the evils that were apprehended there, from the cutting off their great American source of supply in that article. Another resolution was also passed, by which Ireland was allowed to export provisions, hooks, lines, nets, and tools for the implements of the fishery. The committee also agreed to the granting of bounties for encouraging the whale fishery, in those seas that were to the southward of Greenland and Davis's Straits fisheries: and, upon the same principle, took off the duties that were payable upon the importation of oil, blubber, and bone, from Newfoundland, &c. They also took off the duty that was payable upon the importation of seal skins.

A part of the policy of this petty measure was to give to Ireland some portion of the benefits of which the war would deprive America. Mr. Burke on this occasion, while he thanked Lord North for the trifling boon to his country, took occasion to say "that however desirous he might be to promote any scheme for the advantage of Ireland, he would be much better pleased that the benefits thus held out should never be realised, than that Ireland should profit at the expense of a country which was, if possible, more oppressed than herself."

But, strong as was the sympathy between Ireland and America, and earnestly as the mass of the people—both Catholic and Protestant—wished success to the "Patriotic" colonists, the Govern-

approaching any measure for the encouragement of the Irish fisheries. It was in the reign of William III. that certain fishermen in Folkestone and Aldborough, in the south of England, presented mournful petitions to Parliament, stating that they suffered "from Ireland, by the Irish catching herrings at Waterford and Wexford! and sending them to the Straits, and thereby forestalling and ruining the petitioners' markets." These impudent fishermen had, as Hutchinson says, the *hard lot* of having motions which were made in their favour, rejected.—See the *Commercial Restraints*, p. 126.



ment was determined to place the two oppressed countries as far as possible in a position of, at least, apparent antagonism. With this view, Lord Harcourt, in the year 1775—just as hostilities had commenced at Lexington—demanded the services of 4,000 men, out of the 12,000 which then constituted the effective force of regular troops in Ireland, to be despatched to America, for duty there. At the same time, the Lord Lieutenant said it was his gracious Majesty's intention to supply the place of the 4,000 men with foreign Protestant soldiers—in short, with Hessians. The Court party, which was now, on most questions, irresistible (though there were *reserved* questions, as the origination of money-bills), carried the measure for granting the 4,000 men, on the terms that they should not be a charge to the Irish revenue while serving abroad. There was much objection made by the "Patriots," to sending these troops "to cut the throats of the Americans;" and there were many expressions of sympathy and respect towards the colonists, in the course of the debate; but the measure was carried. Mr. Flood, indeed, whose conduct is not clear of the imputation of corruption, voted to send the 4,000 men "as armed negotiators"—such was his cold and cruel expression.\*

But although the Irish Parliament gave these troops, it would not accept the Hessians. Much to the surprise and embarrassment of Government, the second proposition for introducing foreign troops into that kingdom was negatived by nearly as large a majority as the first was carried; namely, by 106 against 68. The House accordingly voted an address to his excellency, expressive of their sense and resolution upon this subject, and stating "that, with the assistance of the Government, his Majesty's loyal people of Ireland may be able so to exert themselves as to make such aid at this juncture unnecessary." This conduct of the Irish Commons is of singular importance in the history of Ireland, inasmuch as it was the first "Patriotic" step taken by the representatives of the people towards attaining that

\* In the tremendous philippic pronounced by Grattan against Flood, in 1783, he thus deals with Mr. Flood's vote of 1775: "With regard to the liberties of America, which were inseparable from ours. I will suppose this gentleman to have been an enemy decided and unreserved; and that he voted against her liberty, and voted, moreover, for an address to send 4,000 Irish troops to cut the throats of the Americans; that he called these butchers 'armed negotiators;' and stood, with a metaphor in his mouth and a bribe in his pocket, a champion against the rights of America, the only hope of Ireland, and the only refuge of the liberties of mankind."—(*Select Speeches of Grattan*, Duffy's edition, p. 104.)

The allusion to the "bribe" meant that Flood had lately accepted an office under Lord Harcourt's administration.



state of civil liberty which was obtained by the nation in what Mr. Burke called "their revolution of 1782." In truth, the address to Lord Harcourt, in which the Legislature promised for the people that they would *exert themselves*, and make foreign soldiers unnecessary, already distinctly foreshadowed the volunteering.

When the 4,000 troops were designated for this American service, an honourable action deserves to be recorded. the Earl of Effingham, finding that the regiment in which he served was destined to act against the colonies, thought it inconsistent with his character, and unbecoming his dignity to enforce measures with his sword, which he had condemned in his legislative capacity. He therefore wrote a letter to the Secretary at War, resigning his command in the army, and stating his reasons for it. This conduct rendered that nobleman extremely popular, and the city of Dublin, at the Midsummer quarter assembly, voted public thanks to Lord Effingham, "for having, consistently with the principles of a true Englishman, refused to draw his sword against the lives and liberties of his fellow-subjects in America." Soon after an address of thanks, in fuller terms, was presented to him from the guild of merchants of Dublin: the latter also presented an address of thanks to the several peers, who (as they said) "in support of the constitution, and in opposition to a weak and wicked administration, protested against the American Restraining Bills." This address, with the several answers of the lords to whom it was presented, appeared at that time in the public papers, and produced a very strong sensation throughout the nation. But on the other hand, we find that great Irish Whig, Lord Rawdon, afterwards Lord Moira, serving zealously in America against the rebels; and it is not without a feeling of shame that Irishmen can ever read on that same list the name of Lord Edward Fitzgerald.

The remainder of Lord Harcourt's administration was occupied mainly with Parliamentary troubles about money bills. Heads of a bill were sent to England granting certain duties for the public service. The bill was altered by the Privy Council, and when it came back it was rejected on that express ground. The "Patriotic" party, then, finding themselves supported on these financial questions by several Members on the opposite side of the House, determined to try their strength upon a motion for an address to the King, setting forth in candid and striking terms the unhappy state of the nation. This motion was made two days before the end of the Session. The address, after the usual preamble, declaring loyal duty and devotion, stated that at the

close of the last war the debt of the nation did not exceed £521,161 16s. 6d., that after a peace of ten years the debt was found to be £994,890 10s. 10d.—“a circumstance so alarming and insupportable to his people, that they determined with one voice to put an end to the pernicious practice of accumulating debts, and they thought it their duty to accomplish that necessary end by first endeavouring to raise the revenue of the kingdom to an equality with the establishment.” They said that economy was promised, that there had been no economy, but a continual increase in the expenses. They added, that could they neglect the most essential interests of themselves, their constituents, and their posterity, still their duty to his Majesty would prevent them from suffering the resources of his Majesty’s power and dignity to dwindle and decay; and that they were the more necessitated to make that earnest application, because the evils they suffered were not temporary or occasional; because they could not attribute them to any physical evil, or proud national exertion, but to a silent, wasting, and invisible cause, which had injured the people, without adding strength to the Crown. That they therefore performed that indispensable duty of laying their distresses at the foot of the throne, that history might not report them a nation, which in the midst of peace, and under a gracious king, equally ready to warn and relieve, proceeded deliberately to their own ruin, without one appeal to the wisdom which would have redressed them. And so they appealed from the temporary expedients of his Majesty’s ministers, to his own wisdom and virtues, and to that permanent interest which his Majesty had, and ever would have, in the welfare of his people.

This address was extremely respectful, even to servility. But though it did not mention the exorbitant pension list, nor the universal corruption and bribery which then were carried on by means of the public money; it told too much truth, and was too undeniable to be endured. Therefore the Government made a point of defeating it, and succeeded. An address was carried in its place, thanking the Lord Lieutenant “for his prudent, just, and wise administration.”

The first Octennial Parliament had scarcely lived four years, when the British Cabinet found it expedient that it should be dissolved. This Parliament had, during the last session, in two instances opposed their mandates, and when summoned to attend the House of Peers, the Commons, through their Speaker, made a just but ungracious and ineffectual representation of the state of that nation. These symptoms of independence alarmed the Government, and created a diffidence in the steadiness of those

who had enlisted under their banners. They looked to more steady submission in a future Parliament, and dissolved the present. Mr. Perry was re-elected Speaker by a majority of 141 to 98. The Lord Lieutenant did not meet the new Parliament, which was convened in June, 1776, *pro forma*, and by several prorogations went over to the 14th of October, 1777. This Parliament now dissolved is memorable for ever in the history of Ireland, for the first appearance of one of the greatest patriots who ever arose for the salvation of any people, and the word patriot is not here used in its merely colonial sense. This was Henry Grattan. He was the descendant of a powerful and influential family, of whom Dean Swift had said, "the Grattans can raise ten thousand men." His father was recorder of Dublin. Henry Grattan entered Parliament as member for Lord Charlemont's borough of Charlemont, on the borders of Armagh and Tyrone; he was then under thirty years of age, and in his first Parliament had been modest and retiring, acquainting himself with the details of public business, and with the forms of the House. It was not until the meeting of the new Parliament, under the administration of Lord Buckinghamshire, that Grattan's lofty character and splendid genius became known to his countrymen and to the world.

The British Cabinet was little satisfied with the administration of Lord Harcourt; the easy and delicate turn of his mind ill qualified him to support, much less to improve upon the system of his predecessor, but by which alone, to the infamy and misfortune of Ireland, the legislators of that kingdom were to be kept steady in their ranks under command of the Castle. Although Government upon the whole still retained a considerable majority, yet several of their adherents had occasionally, during the last session, proved recreant from their instructions; some had deserted their ranks, many amongst them wavered, menaced, and complained of the terms of their engagements. It was therefore resolved to invigorate the new system by the election of a new Parliament. For this purpose an unusual, and till that time unprecedented, number of promotions in the peerage took place in one day. It far exceeded the famous promotion of twelve in the days of Queen Anne. Five viscounts were advanced to earldoms, seven barons to be viscounts, and eighteen new barons were created in the same day. The usual terms of such modern peerages are well understood to be an engagement to support the cause of their promoters by their individual votes in the House of Peers, and by those of their substitutes in the House of Commons, whose seats are usually settled and arranged before



they vacate them upon their promotions. In short every possible precaution was adopted to secure a subservient Irish Parliament in the crisis which had been created by the American war. But in the very month of October, in which the new Viceroy, Lord Buckinghamshire, met the new Parliament, General Burgoyne was surrendering his army of 7,000 men to the Americans at Saratoga. The next year France declared for America. The administration, therefore, of this new Lord Lieutenant dates a new era in the history of Ireland and of the earth. The English colony in Ireland suddenly, and for a short time, takes the proportions of a nation.

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## CHAPTER XVIII.

1777—1779.

THE earlier years of Lord Buckinghamshire's Viceroyalty were not marked by any very striking events, much different from the routine of Parliamentary business during the preceding administrations. When this nobleman assumed the reins of Government, the country was still suffering the most poignant distress; while the national debt and all public charges were accumulating. Petitions now poured into both Houses, representing the sad facts with regard to declining trade. As these petitions certainly stated the truth, they are really valuable historical documents, illustrative of the period.

Thus a petition was presented to the House of Commons, from the merchants and traders of Cork, setting forth that about the month of November, 1770, an embargo was laid on all ships laden with provisions, and bound from Ireland to foreign countries, which was still continued by Government, and had been very strictly enforced: that in consequence of that long embargo, an extensive beneficial trade, carried on for several years by that kingdom to France, Spain, Portugal, and Holland, for the supply of provisions, had been not only interrupted, but was in danger of being entirely lost; the petitioners being informed that the merchants of these countries were respectively stocked and provided from Russia, Sweden, Denmark, and Hamburg, whereby the usual returns to that kingdom were discontinued, new enemies to our commerce were raised and our commodities rendered useless and unprofitable. That great quantities of salt beef, not fit for the use of Government or the sugar colonies, being made up in that city, and also great quantities of beef and butter being



annually brought to that market, these commodities of a perishable nature were there decaying for want of a free export, to the great injury of the proprietors in particular, and of the kingdom in general. That in support of these assertions, there then remained on hand, since the preceding year, a very considerable quantity of provisions, the property of several merchants in that city, not wanted by Government, and therefore without opportunity of sale; and although a considerable part of the season in which those articles were made up and exported had already elapsed, no demand whatsoever then existed for them, except for such quantities as were required by Government alone. That his Majesty's revenue, which before had received large and constant supplies from the customs of the city of Cork, had decreased in proportion to the decay of their trade. That the embargo, therefore, at that time not being warranted by any great, substantial necessity but on the contrary, restraining and preventing the diffusion of trade, was pregnant with the most ruinous consequences, not only to the commercial, but also to the landed interests of the nation; and therefore the petitioners prayed redress.

The Dublin manufacturers, in their petition, had a still sadder narrative to give. For example, they declared that there were at that moment no fewer than 20,000 persons in that one city, artisans, out of work, together with their families, whom they, the petitioners, were supporting for charity by means of a relief association established among themselves; nor was Government able to make grants, either to promote industry or to relieve the national calamities. Every branch of the revenue failed, and such was the poverty of the nation, that the militia law could not be carried into effect. Ireland could not pay her forces abroad, and was obliged to borrow money from England to pay those at home. The Parliament was necessitated to raise money at an exorbitant interest; the expenses in 1777 having amounted to above £80,000 more than the revenue: £166,000 were therefore borrowed, and attempted to be raised in the old manner upon debentures at £4 per cent.

So truly desperate was the financial state of Ireland, that, like desponding bankrupts, the Commons undertook to grant what they knew they had not the means of paying. Even the ministerial party could not be blind to their situation. They would not, however, permit any question to be brought forward upon the state of the country in the Commons, lest too strong resolutions upon it should be carried, or their opposition to them should appear even too rank for their own system. They accord-

ingly had again recourse to the half-measure of conveying their imperfect sense of the distressful state of the country through their Speaker, who, in presenting the first four money bills passed in that Session, addressed himself to the Lord Lieutenant in very general terms, expressing the unbounded confidence of the House in his Majesty's wisdom, justice, and paternal care, and relying on the Viceroy's "candour and humanity to make a faithful representation to his Majesty of their unshaken loyalty, duty, and affection."

Thus the pitiful and hopeless contest went on, upon these questions of the money bills, the pension list, and general extravagance of Government. The "Patriots" saw well that they could not now hope to carry any really important measure, resolution, or address, that should be distasteful to the Castle. Yet they resolved to put on record, at least once in each session, their own theory of the evils of the country. Therefore, after the speech of the Lord Lieutenant, a motion was made for a humble address to his Majesty, setting forth that the civil list had doubled in twenty years; that one great cause was "the rapid and astonishing growth of the pension list;" that ministers had repeatedly promised retrenchment, but had, on the contrary, continually increased their demands, and other the like topics. This address was negatived by a majority of 77—so well drilled were the ministerial members.

The alarming news of the French alliance with the Americans was communicated to Parliament by the Lord Lieutenant, in a special message; and this was instantly followed by a demand of a new loan of £30,000, at six per cent. A few days after, came a new message, to apprise them that the loan (which they had at once voted to raise) could not be effected at six per cent., and to demand further action upon their part. Thus, as the American war was drawing to a close, Ireland had neither money nor credit—was absolutely ruled by placeholders and pensioners, and was made to contribute her last shilling and contract further debt, to defeat and ruin a cause which nine-tenths of her people felt to be Ireland's own cause as well as America's.

Lord North, who was not wanting in sagacity, understood the state of Irish affairs very well; he saw the rising impatience of the "Patriot" party in the colony, and knew that the contagion of American ideas was fast growing and spreading. It was at this time, therefore, that the British Ministry resolved to take a more important step towards conciliation of the Catholics than had yet been ventured upon, with the hope of actually making the Catholic people a kind of English interest, against the Protestant

Patriots. It was not, indeed, contemplated to repeal the whole Penal Code—very far from this—but to admit certain slight relaxations only in certain parts of that elaborate system. In the English Parliament, first, with the full consent of the minster, a motion was made for leave to bring in a “Bill for repeal of certain of the penalties and disabilities provided in an Act of William the Third,” &c. On this English debate, it seemed that the Parliament was tolerably unanimous in approbation of a very modest and limited measure in this direction; but it must be remembered that the Catholics in England were but one in ten of the population; and there could not be the slightest danger, either to the settlement of property or to what Englishmen call the freedom of the country, in relieving them from at least a few of the most dreadful penalties to which they were every day exposed. Indeed in England there had been long a practical toleration of Catholic worship; yet, as Lord Ashburton observed, on seconding the motion of Sir George Savile, “the mildness of Government had hitherto softened the rigour of the law in the practice, but it was to be considered that the Roman Catholic priests were still left at the mercy of the lowest and basest of mankind; for on the complaint of any informing constable, the magisterial and judicial powers were bound to enforce all the shameful penalties of the act.” In fact, some time before this period the Penal Laws had been enforced against two priests, a Mr. Malony and Mr. Talbot, the brother of the Earl of Shrewsbury. These proceedings had been resorted to by a solitary individual, one *Pain*, a carpenter, who having two daughters, little business, much bigotry, and more covetousness, had formed the singular speculation of acquiring £20,000 apiece for his daughters’ fortunes by informations under the penal statutes against the Catholics.

The English bill passed without opposition;\* but when the new policy of minsters came to be applied to Ireland, it was a different matter. In this island the proprietors of confiscated estates did not yet feel quite secure. They had always been accustomed to believe that the “Protestant interest”—that is, their own exclusive possession of all the lands and of all the profitable professions and trades—depended upon keeping the Catholics completely under foot. There was now, indeed, no apprehension of “bringing in the Pretender;” for the Pretender was dead, and had left no heir of the Stuarts; but the settlement of

\* A circumstance which excited the enlightened Protestants of London to make their famous No Popery Riot, break jails and burn houses, under the saintly Lord George Gordon.



property, the exclusive access to the professions, these were the truly momentous and sacred interests of Protestantism. In Ireland, therefore, though the measure came recommended by the example of England, and the express wishes of the administration, it was warmly contested at every point. On the eleventh day after the universal assent to Sir George Savile's motion in favour of the Roman Catholics of England, Mr. Gardiner, on the 25th of May, 1778, made a motion in the Irish House of Commons, that leave be given to bring in heads of a bill for the relief of his Majesty's Roman Catholic subjects of Ireland, and that Mr. Gardiner, the Hon. Barry Barry, and Mr. Yelverton, do prepare and bring in the same; and it was carried in the affirmative. At the same time the Presbyterians of Ireland, bearing in mind that the sacramental test had been imposed upon their ancestors by their lying by, when new severities were imposed upon their Roman Catholic brethren, came forward on this occasion to avail themselves of the first symptoms of tolerance in an Irish Parliament. Sir Edward Newnham on the same day moved that leave might be given to bring in heads of a bill for the relief of his Majesty's subjects the Protestant Dissenters of that kingdom: and Sir Edward Newnham and Sir Boyle Roche were ordered to prepare and bring in the same. But whether from a conviction that the relief to the Dissenters was not of equal urgency with that proposed to be granted to the Roman Catholics, or that the British Cabinet had hitherto expressed no opinion or inclination in their favour, the measure was remitted to another session.

The Catholic Bill did not propose to let the Catholics have arms, horses, education, a seat in Parliament, a vote at elections, a right to sit upon juries, or entrance into municipal corporations; but, slender as was the concession, it was bitterly opposed, and that even by "Patriots," who had no wider idea of Patriotism than the measure of the Protestant interest. On the 5th June, 1778, five divisions were had upon the bill in the Irish House: each was carried in the affirmative, by a small majority; and on the 15th of the same month there were three divisions. The Protestants throughout the kingdom were taking the alarm, and petitions were pouring in from the corporations. On this 15th of June, for example, a petition from the mayor, sheriffs, common council, freemen, freeholders, and other Protestant inhabitants of the city of Cork, was presented against the bill.

On the 16th, on motion to resolve into committee of the whole House, to take the heads of the bill into further consideration, the House divided, and the motion was defeated. On the 18th, the House sat in committee over these heads of a bill till three o'clock



in the morning, and on the 19th till four o'clock. At last, on the 20th, Mr. Gardiner was ordered to attend his Excellency the Lord Lieutenant with the said heads of a bill, and desire the same might be transmitted into Great Britain in due form. Thus, after the severest contest, with the full and unequivocal approbation of Government, the general support of "the Patriots," and the unanimous accord of the British Legislature in a similar indulgence to the Roman Catholics of England, were these heads of a bill carried through the Irish House of Commons by the small majority of nine. Upon the third reading of this bill in the House of Lords, the contents with their proxies were 36, and the not contents were 12. On the 14th of August the Lord Lieutenant put an end to the Session.

The British Ministry soon saw cause to extend their policy of conciliation, and to assent to some very trifling relaxations of the restrictions upon Irish trade and commerce. Some intelligent and patriotic Englishmen, Lord Newhaven and the Marquis of Rockingham amongst the number, pressed on the Parliament of England the propriety of granting to the Irish nation the liberty of exporting their produce, with the extraordinary exception of their woollens, which formed a principal ingredient. Lord Weymouth, however, resisted so dangerous a concession to the claims of Ireland; and the only compromise which was effected was an Export Bill, with the special exception of woollens and cottons. The Bristol merchants, who appear through the whole history of English avarice and tyranny to have been influenced by a policy pre-eminently mean, selfish, and grasping—the genuine spirit of paltry trade—went so far as to heap insults on their representative, Edmund Burke, for supporting the measure.

In the mean time the Irish Parliament, in its Session of 1778, had passed a "militia bill," to authorize the formation of volunteer forces for defence of the country. French and American privateers were sweeping the seas and the British channel: the wide extent of the Irish coast was left exposed without defence, and there began to be very general alarm in the seaport towns. Mr. Flood had formerly proposed a national militia, but the idea was not then favoured by the Government, and it failed. The militia bill of this year was not opposed by the administration; probably they little thought to what proportion the militia would develop itself, and how far it would extend its aims; but it immediately occurred to the Patriots, that while the English Parliament was peddling and higgling over the miserable and grudging relaxations of Ireland's commercial restraints, here was a gracious opportunity presenting itself for exercising such a resistless pres-

sure upon England, in her hour of difficulty and danger (England's difficulty being then, as always, Ireland's opportunity), as would compel her to yield, not only a free trade, but a free Parliament : and the former, they knew, would never be fully assured without the latter. It was now that public spirit in Ireland, instead of colonial, began to be truly *national*, and this chiefly by the strong impulse and inspiration of Henry Grattan, who saw, in the extension of the volunteering spirit, a means of combining the two discordant elements of the Irish people into one nation, and elevating the Catholics to the rank of citizens, not by the insidious "boons" of the English, but through the cordial combination and amalgamation of the Irish for their common defence.

It was for some months anxiously considered and debated at the Castle whether the forces which were to be raised, under the new law, were to be a true militia, and therefore subject to martial law, or to be composed of independent volunteer companies, choosing their own officers. But this question was soon settled by the people themselves, who were rapidly forming themselves into the latter kind of organization, and who evidently felt that they were arming, not so much against the foreign enemy as against the British Government.

The volunteering began at Belfast. In August, 1778, the people of that town were alarmed by stories of privateers hovering near : they remembered their imminent peril at the time of Thurot's expedition, and at once began to organize and arm volunteer companies, as they had done before on that memorable occasion. At the same time the "Sovereign" of the town, Mr. Stewart Burke, wrote to the Irish Secretary, urging that some troops should be sent down. He received this answer—

"DUBLIN CASTLE, *August 14th*, 1778.

"SIR,—My Lord Lieutenant having received information that there is reason to apprehend that three or four privateers in company may in a few days make attempts on the northern coasts of this kingdom ; by his excellency's command, I give you the earliest account thereof, in order that there may be a careful watch, and immediate intelligence given to the inhabitants of Belfast, in case any party from such ships should attempt to land.

"The greatest part of the troops being encamped near Clonmel and Kinsale, his excellency can at present send no further military aid to Belfast *than a troop or two of horse, or part of a company of invalids* ; and his excellency desires you will acquaint me by express whether a troop or two of horse can be properly accommodated in Belfast, so long as it may be proper to continue

them in that town, in addition to the two troops now there.—I have, &c.,

RICHARD HERON."

This is but one of many communications which passed at the time between the Government and the authorities of Belfast. In most of them, the former express their satisfaction at the spirit of the volunteer companies then formed or about to be formed; with no sincerity, as we shall see presently.

It was evident, then, that the Government was in no condition to defend Ireland, if Ireland had really been menaced with invasion; and therefore quite as little in a condition to resist a great national military organization, no matter what form that might assume. In fact, after the example of Belfast, the whole country now rushed to arms. It was a scene of wild and noble excitement. Crowds thronged the public places of resort, anxious and resolved: in every assembly of the people the topic was "defence of the country;" and if there were many who from the first felt that the country had but one enemy in the world from whom it needed defence (that is, England), the reflection only heightened their zeal in promoting the national armament. On the 1st December, 1778, the people of Armagh entered into voluntary armed associations, and offered the command to Lord Charlemont. He at first refused; because, as Lord Lieutenant of the county, he might at any time be called on to command the militia: but his lordship soon saw that volunteering was the irresistible order of the day; and that not to be a Volunteer would soon amount to being nobody at all in Ireland. Probably, also, he was influenced by the more powerful will and deeper sagacity of his friend Grattan; and in January, 1779, he assumed command of the Armagh Volunteers.\*

The Government of the day soon saw itself powerless to resist this potent movement. It, however, concealed its apprehensions for the present, under the mask of gratitude for the loyal zeal of the people. Loyal as undoubtedly the institution was—loyal even to the prejudices which Government must have wished to foster, for one of their earliest celebrations was the Battle of the Boyne†—the English interest trembled at what to their appalled

\* Stuart's History of Armagh. MacNevin's Volunteers. Plowden. Hardy's Charlemont. Sir Jonah Barrington, Rise and Fall, &c. The authorities for the history of the Volunteers are innumerable, and will only be cited for some special fact.

† July 1, 1779.—"Our three Volunteer companies paraded in their uniform with orange cockades, and fired three volleys with their usual steadiness and regularity, in commemoration of the Battle of the Boyne."  
—*Hist. Collections relative to the Town of Belfast.*



imagination seemed to be the infancy of revolution. Thus, whilst the wretched Government, unable to discharge its functions, and resigning the defence of the country to the virtue and valour of her children, looked on in angry amazement at the daily increasing numbers of the Volunteers, their training into discipline, their martial array and military celebrations, the great officers of the executive were planning how best they might stifle in its birth the warlike spirit of the people.

In May, 1779, we find a letter of Lord Buckinghamshire to Lord Weymouth, which clearly proves the fears and hypocrisy of Government, and the alarming progress of the armament :—

“Upon receiving official intimation that the enemy meditated an attack upon the northern parts of Ireland, the inhabitants of Belfast and Carrickfergus, *as Government could not immediately afford a greater force for their protection than about sixty troopers*, armed themselves, and by degrees formed themselves into two or three companies ; the spirit diffused itself into different parts of the kingdom, and the numbers became considerable, but in no degree to the amount represented. *Discouragement has, however, been given on my part, as far as might be without offence, at a crisis when the arm and good-will of every individual might have been wanting for the defence of the State.*”

Lord Buckinghamshire, in another part of the same letter, attributes the rapid increase in the ranks of the Volunteers to an idea that was entertained amongst the people that their numbers would conduce to the attainment of political advantages for their country.

All motives conduced to the same end, and that end—the armed organization of Ireland—was rapidly approaching. The fire of the people and their anxiety to enter the ranks of the national army may be judged from the fact, that in September, 1779, the return of the Volunteers in the counties of Antrim and Down, and in and near Coleraine, amounted to :—

Total in the county of Down	...	...	2,241
Total in the county of Antrim	...	...	1,474
In and near Coleraine	...	...	210
			<hr/> 3,925

Of these, the great majority were fully equipped and armed—and glittered in the gay uniform of the Volunteers. Some few companies were, however, unarmed even up to a later period, until the pressure on Government compelled them to distribute the arms intended for the militia to worthier hands.



The uniforms of the Volunteers were very various, and of all the colours of the rainbow. The uniform of the Lawyers' corps was scarlet and blue, their motto, "*Pro aris et focis*;" the Attorneys' regiment of Volunteers was scarlet and Pomona green; a corps called the Irish Brigade, and composed principally of Catholics (after the increasing liberality of the day had permitted them to become Volunteers), wore scarlet and white; other regiments of Irish Brigades wore scarlet faced with green, and their motto was, "*Vox populi suprema lex est*;" the Goldsmiths' corps, commanded by the Duke of Leinster, wore blue, faced with scarlet and a professional profusion of gold lace.

The "Irish Volunteers" were at first a Protestant organization exclusively. It was only by degrees and with extreme jealousy that its ranks were afterwards opened to those of the proscribed race. It might seem, indeed, that the Catholics would have been justified in taking no interest in the movement, and that they had little to hope from any change. They were not yet citizens, and if permitted to breathe in Ireland, it was by connivance, and against the law. Even the most zealous of the new Volunteers, who were now springing to arms for defence of Ireland, were, with some illustrious exceptions, *their* most determined and resolute foes. But, plunged in poverty and ignorance as they were, despoiled of rank, and arms, and votes, they yet seem to have felt instinctively that a movement for Irish independence, if successful, must end in their emancipation. They had grown numerous, and many of them rich, in the midst of persecution; and, notwithstanding the penal laws against education, many of the Catholics were in truth the best educated and accomplished persons in the island. These instructed and thoughtful Catholics could see very well—what Grattan also saw, but what most Cromwellian squires and Williamite peers could not see—that if Ireland should still pretend "to stand upon her smaller end," she would not long stand against England. Then they were naturally a warlike race; and, it must be added to their credit, that the late small and peddling relaxations in the Penal Code, urged on by the British Minister in order to conciliate them to the English interest, had signally failed. The English interest, as they felt, was the great and necessary enemy of all Ireland, and of every one of its inhabitants, and so it was very soon apparent that the armed Protestant Volunteers would have at their back the two millions of Catholic Irish.

There is in the dark records of the depravity of the Government of that day a singular document, which, while it attests the patriotism and zeal of the Catholics, illustrates the base and vile

spirit which repelled their loyalty and refused their aid. The Earl of Tyrone wrote to one of the Beresfords, a member of that grasping patrician family, which had long ruled the country,\* that the Catholics in their zeal were forming themselves into independent companies, and had actually begun their organization; but that, seeing the variety of consequences which would attend such an event, he had found it his duty to stop their movement! Miserable Government—unable to discharge its first duty of defence, and trembling to depute them to the noble and forgiving spirit of a gallant people! The Catholics of Limerick, forbidden the use of arms, subscribed and made a present of £800 to the treasury of the Volunteers.

During all this time “the Castle” looked on in silent alarm. Even so late as May, 1779, when the Volunteer companies numbered probably 20,000 men, the Lord Lieutenant gravely considered whether it were still possibly to disperse and disarm them by force. In one of his letters to Lord Weymouth† he says:—“The seizing of their arms would have been a violent expedient, and the preventing them from assembling without a military force impracticable; for when the civil magistrate will rarely attempt to seize an offender suspected of the most enormous crimes, and when convicted, convey him to the place of execution without soldiers; nay, when in many instances persons cannot be put into possession of their property, nor being possessed, maintain it without such assistance, there is little presumption in asserting, that, unless bodies of troops had been universally dispersed, nothing could have been done to effect this. My accounts state the number of corps as not exceeding 8,000 men, some without arms, and in the whole, very few who are liable to a suspicion of disaffection.”

But in the next month, the same Viceroy communicates to the same minister, that, by advice of the Privy Council of Ireland, he had supplied the Volunteers with part of the arms intended for the militia. This was really giving up the island into the hands of the Volunteers. The leaders of that force at once felt that they might do what they would with Ireland—for a time. After the delivery of the arms, the numbers of Volunteers rapidly and greatly increased.‡

But a spirit of great moderation reigned over the councils of this armed nation. It was, in the hands of those leaders, any

\* May, 28, 1779. Grattan's Life: cited by MacNevin.

† May 24, 1779.

‡ 16,000 stand of arms were delivered to the Volunteers at this time.

thing rather than a republican, or agrarian, or revolutionary movement. Thus they adopted a system of officering their army which gave a pledge that no anarchical idea had place in their thoughts. The soldiers elected their own commanders; and whom, says MacNevin, whom did they choose? "Whom did this democratic army select to rule their councils and direct their power? Not the low ambitious—not the village vulgar brawler—but the men who, by large possessions, lofty character, and better still, by virtue and by genius, had given to their names a larger patent than nobility. Flood and Grattan, Charlemont and Leinster—the chosen men in all the liberal professions—the orators who led the "Patriot" party in the Commons—the good, the high, the noble; these were the officers who held unpurchased honours in the Volunteers. We may well look back, with mournful pride, through the horrid chaos where rebellion and national ruin rule the murky night, to this one hour of glory—of power uncorrupted, and opportunities unabused."

It is difficult to arrive at any accurate statement of the numbers of the Volunteers within the first year of their organization. There have been both exaggerative and depreciative estimates. We have seen that the Lord Lieutenant, in June, 1779, had supposed their force to be only 8,000; yet in the very next month had yielded to them a demand which it would have been vitally important to the Government to refuse them. And as will be always the case, where the money of Government can command the venal crew of writers, the most elaborate falsehood and the most insulting ridicule were poured upon the heads of those by whose exertions the national cause was so nobly maintained. In *Lloyd's Evening Post*, an article appeared on the 7th of July, stating that the numbers of the Volunteers had been monstrously exaggerated; that no call could bring into the field 20,000 men; that persons of all ages were enrolled and put on paper; that every gentleman belonged to two, and most of them to five or six different corps, and that by this ubiquity and divisibility of person, the muster-rolls of the companies were swelled. Doubtless there was some exaggeration in the representation of the numbers occasionally made; but a competent authority, commenting on this article, states, that at this time there were 95,000.

In the ranks of the Volunteers there were, in point of fact, very many Catholics, from a very early period of the movement; but they were there by *connivance*, as they were everywhere else. But in the next year, after meetings of Volunteers had passed resolutions in favour of Catholic rights, the young men of that



religion began to swell the numbers of many corps. Some corps were composed altogether of Catholics : and when the Dungannon Convention came the Volunteer army was at least 75,000 strong.

During the summer of 1779 an event occurred, which immensely stimulated the volunteering spirit:—the combined fleets of France and Spain entered the Channel in overwhelming force, which the British could not venture to encounter : the vessels passing between England and Ireland were placed under the protection of convoys ; Paul Jones, with his little squadron, fought and captured, within sight of the English coast, the *Serapis* man-of-war and Scarborough frigate, with many vessels under their convoy : in short, there was another alarm of invasion both in England and in Ireland. MacNevin, in his History of the Volunteers, says with a cool *naïveté* which is charming, that this “was fortunate for the reputation of the Volunteers, for the purpose of establishing their fidelity to the *original principle* of their body”—which principle was defence of the country against a foreign enemy. Most of the Volunteers knew well that their only foreign enemy was England, and that France, Spain, and America would have been most happy to deliver them from that enemy. They knew, also, that the only use of the Volunteer force, in practice, was likely to be the wresting of their national independence from England. However, the new alarm aided, and seemed to justify, the volunteering. Therefore, the delegates of 125 corps of Volunteers, all of them men of rank and character, waited on the Lord Lieutenant with offers of service “in such manner as shall be thought necessary for the safety and protection of the kingdom.” The offer was accepted, but very coldly, and without naming “Volunteers.”

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## CHAPTER XIX.

1779—1780.

To force from reluctant England a Free Trade, and the repeal, or rather declaratory nullification, of Poynings' Law, which required the Irish Parliament to submit the heads of their bills to the English Privy Council before they could presume to pass them—these were, in few words, the two great objects which the leaders of the Volunteers kept now steadily before them. It must be here observed that the idea and the term “free trade,” as then understood in Ireland, did not represent what the political economists now call free trade. What was sought was a release from

those restrictions on Irish trade imposed by an English Parliament, and for the profit of the English people. This did not mean that imports and exports should be free of all duty to the State, but only that the fact of import or export itself should not be restrained by foreign laws, and that the duties to be derived from it should be imposed by Ireland's own Parliament, and in the sole interest of Ireland herself. This distinction is the more important to be observed, because modern "free traders" in Ireland and in England have sometimes appealed to the authority of the enlightened men who then governed the Volunteer movement as an authority in favour of abolishing import and export duties. The citation is by no means applicable.

The first measure to convince England that Ireland was entitled to an unrestricted trade, was the "non-importation agreement," which many of the Volunteer corps, as well as town corporations, solemnly adopted by resolutions, during the year 1779. Although there were frequent debates in the British Parliament this year on the subject of modifying the laws prohibiting the export of cottons, woollens, and provisions, from Ireland, yet it was but too plain that the rapacious spirit of British commerce, and the menacing, almost frantic, opposition given to all consideration of such measure, by petitions, which sounded more like threats, coming from the great centres of trade in England, Manchester, Glasgow, Liverpool, and Bristol, would render all redress hopeless from that quarter. The non-importation agreements became popular, and the people of many towns and counties were steadily refusing to wear or use in their houses any kind of wares coming from England. The town of Galway had the honour of leading the way in this movement: the example was immediately followed by corps of Volunteers in many counties; and as the Volunteers were already the *fashion*, women sustained their patriotic resolution, and ladies of wealth began to clothe themselves exclusively in Irish fabrics. The resolutions are not uniform in their tenor. At a general meeting of the Freemen and Freeholders of the city of Dublin, convened by public notice, these resolutions were passed:—

"*Resolved*, That the unjust, illiberal, and impolitic opposition given by many self-interested people of Great Britain to the proposed encouragement of the trade and commerce of this kingdom, originated in avarice and ingratitude.

"*Resolved*, That we will not, directly or indirectly, import, or use any goods or wares, the produce or manufactures of Great Britain, which can be produced or manufactured in this kingdom, till an enlightened policy, founded on principles of justice, shall

appear to actuate the inhabitants of certain manufacturing towns of Great Britain, who have taken so active a part in opposing the regulations proposed in favour of the trade of Ireland; and till they appear to entertain sentiments of respect and affection for their fellow-subjects of this kindom."

Shortly after the assizes at Waterford, the high sheriff, grand jury, and a number of the most respectable inhabitants, assembled for the purpose of taking into consideration the ruinous state of the trade and manufactures, and the alarming decline in the value of the staple commodities of the kingdom; and looking upon it as an indispensable duty that they owed their country and themselves, to restrain, by every means in their power, these growing evils, they passed and signed the following resolutions:—

"*Resolved*, That we, our families, and all whom we can influence, shall, from this day, wear and make use of the manufactures of this country, and this country only, until such time as all partial restrictions on our trade, imposed by the illiberal and contracted policy of our sister kingdom, be removed; but if, in consequence of this our resolution, the manufacturers (whose interest we have more immediately under consideration) should act fraudulently, or combine to impose upon the public, we shall hold ourselves no longer bound to countenance and support them.

"*Resolved*, That we will not deal with any merchant or shop-keeper who shall, at any time hereafter, be detected in imposing any foreign manufacture as the manufacture of this country."

Resolutions of this kind became general, in consequence of which efforts the manufactures of Ireland began to revive, and the demand for British goods in a great measure decreased, a circumstance which tended to produce a disposition in Great Britain to attend to the complaints of that country, different indeed from that which Ireland had hitherto experienced.

The feeling of Government on the subject of non-importation was one of great irritation, and their partisans in Parliament did not hesitate to give bitter utterance to their hatred of the Volunteers and of the commercial movement. Lord Shelburne, in May, 1779, called the Irish army an "enraged mob;" but the phrase was infelicitous, and told only half the truth. They were enraged, but they were not a mob. They had no one quality of a mob. They had discipline, arms, and a military system. Their ranks were filled with gentlemen, and officered by nobles. But such expressions as Lord Shelburne's were of great advantage. They kept clearly, in bold relief, the ancient and irremovable feeling of Englishmen, and the contemptuous falsehood of their estimate of the Irish people. In the same spirit, the organ of



Government wrote to the central authority in England on the subject of the non-importation agreement:—"For some days past, the names of the traders who appear by the printed returns of the custom-house to have imported any English goods, have been printed in the Dublin newspaper. This is probably calculated for the abominable purpose of drawing the indignation of the mob upon individuals, and is supposed to be the act of the meanest of the faction."\* When the Lord Lieutenant penned this paragraph, he did not, assuredly, remember the meanness of the manufacturers and traders of his own country, or the measures adopted by the English Parliament, at their dictation, to crush the trade and paralyze the industry of this country. The retaliation was just, and no means that could have been adopted could equal the atrocity of the conduct of the English towns to the productive industry of Ireland. Englishmen had a Parliament obedient to the dictates of the encroaching spirit of English trade—the Irish people had not as yet established their freedom, nor armed themselves with the resistless weapon of free institutions. They were obliged to legislate for themselves, and were justified by the exigency in adopting any means to enforce the national will. It seems strange that it should be necessary to defend the measure of holding up to scorn the traitors who could expose in their shops articles of foreign consumption, every article of which was a representative of their country's impoverishment and decay. But the English press denounced it as the policy of savages, and pointed out the Irish people to the contumely of Europe. At the same time, the English manufacturers, ever careless of present sacrifices to secure permanent advantages, flooded the country towns with the accumulated products of the woollen manufacture, which, owing to the war and other causes, had remained on their hands. They offered these goods to the small shopkeepers at the lowest possible prices, and desired them to name their own time for payment; and they partially succeeded in inducing many of the low and embarrassed servitors of trade, through their necessities, and by the seductive promise of long credit, to become traitors to the cause of Irish industry. The Volunteers and the leaders of the movement were equally active on their side. The press, the pulpit, and the ball-room were enlisted in the cause of native industry. The scientific institutions circulated, gratuitously, tracts on the improvement of manufacture—on the modes adopted in the Continental manufacturing districts, and on the economy of production. Trade

\* Letter of the Lord Lieutenant to Lord Weymouth, May, 1779.

revived; the manufacturers who had thronged the city of Dublin, the ghastly apparitions of decayed industry, found employment provided for them by the patriotism and spirit of the country; the proscribed goods of England remained unsold, or only sold under false colours, by knavish and profligate retailers; the country enjoyed some of the fruits of freedom before she obtained freedom itself.

The Session of the Irish Parliament of 1779-80 had been looked forward to with profound interest; and it opened with stormy omens. The speech from the Lord Lieutenant contained more than the usual quantity of inexplicit falsehood and diplomatic subterfuge. The address, in reply, was its echo, or would have been, but that Henry Grattan, he who was above all others, the *man* of his day, moved his celebrated amendment. The speech of the Viceroy had alluded with skilful obscurity to certain liberal intentions of the King on the subject of trade: but there was no promise for hope to rest upon: it was vague, and without meaning. This was not what the spirit of the hour or the genius of the men would endure. They felt the time had come to strike with mortal blow the whole system of English tyranny, and to give freedom and security to the trade and industry of Ireland.

When the speech was read in the Commons, the English interest anxiously scanned the opposition benches. They saw that something would be done embarrassing to their system and to them; but they could not anticipate the blow that was ready for their heads, or that their fiercest foe would be a placeman in their ranks. An address was proposed by Sir Robert Deane, a drudge of Government, re-echoing, in servility, the vague generalities of the speech. Grattan then rose to propose his amendment:—

“That we beseech his Majesty to believe that it is with the utmost reluctance we presume to approach his royal person with even the smallest appearance of dissatisfaction; but that the distress of this kingdom is such as renders it an indispensable duty in us to lay the melancholy state of it before his Majesty, and to point out what we apprehend to be the only effectual means of relief; that the constant drain of its cash to supply absentees, and the fetters on its commerce, have always been sufficient to prevent this country from becoming opulent in its circumstances, but that those branches of trade which have hitherto enabled it to struggle with the difficulties it labours under, have now almost totally failed; that its commercial credit is sunk, all its resources are decaying rapidly, and numbers of its most industrious inha-

bitants in danger of perishing for want; that as long as they were able to flatter themselves that the progress of those evils might be stopped by their own efforts, they were unwilling to trouble his Majesty upon the subject of their distress; but, finding that they increase upon them, notwithstanding all their endeavours, they are at last obliged to have recourse to his Majesty's benignity and justice, and most humbly to acquaint him that, in their opinion, the only effectual remedy that can be applied to the sufferings of this kingdom, that can either invigorate its credit or support its people, is to open its ports for the exportation of all its manufactures; that it is evident to every unprejudiced mind that Great Britain would derive as much benefit from this measure as Ireland itself, but that Ireland cannot subsist without it; and that it is with the utmost grief they find themselves under the necessity of again acquainting his Majesty that, unless some happy change in the state of its affairs takes place without delay, it must inevitably be reduced to remain a burden upon England, instead of increasing its resources, or affording it the assistance which its natural affection for that country, and the intimate connection between their interests, have always inclined it to offer."

Grattan's speech in support of the amendment must have been badly preserved, for what remains bears no proportion to the magnitude of the interests or the absorbing nature of the subject.

To the rage and dismay of Government—passions of which unequivocal demonstrations were given on the ministerial benches—Hussey Burgh, the prime serjeant, one of the most eloquent and fascinating men of the day, an official of Government, a staunch supporter, one to whom, from the spirit of his office patriotism should have been impossible, moved that "we beg to represent to his Majesty that it is not by temporary expedients, but by *a free trade alone*, that this nation is now to be saved from impending ruin." This resolution was carried unanimously; the supporters of Government saw that it was useless to oppose the spirit of the House; the nation was standing petitioner at their bar for the privileges of nature, production and consumption; the Volunteers were drawn up through the streets of Dublin, with an intelligible alternative hung round the necks of their cannon, "Free Trade or——;" and the amendment of Henry Grattan, with the improvements of Burgh, received on the part of the "Patriots" an exulting support, and on the part of the ministers a fearful and angry assent. The day after this distinguished success, the addresses of the Lords and Commons were brought up to the Castle; the streets, from the House to the seat of



Government, were lined with the corps of the Dublin Volunteers, under arms, who paid military honours to the favourite leaders; the city was in a tumult of joy and triumph, contrasting not unfavourably with the gloom and irritation of the Castle. And that no doubt might be entertained of the authors of this important movement—that the merit of success should be laid at the right door, thanks to the Volunteers were moved and carried in the Lords and Commons. The motion in the House of Commons was made by Mr. Conolly, the head of the country gentlemen. The Duke of Leinster carried the motion through the Lords, with only one dissentient voice, Lord Chancellor Lifford, one of those English lawyers who are sent over to Ireland, from time to time, to occupy the highest seats of justice and enjoy the largest emoluments in the country. The Lord Lieutenant, in writing to Lord Weymouth, complains bitterly of these votes; unanimous expressions as they were of the feelings of all classes in the state, they appeared in a most reprehensible light to the Viceroy, who petulantly wrote home his complaint that the proceeding was occasioned wholly by the Duke of Leinster.

The Government, quite alive to the fact that the present posture of affairs resulted from the power and determination of the Volunteers, set on one of its habitual agents to assail them. This was Scott, the Attorney-General, who afterwards, as Lord Clonmel, was, with a few monstrous exceptions, the most inhuman Judge that ever presided in the shambles of Irish justice. He attacked the Volunteers with an habitual vulgar fury—described them by every name which the quick invention of a ferocious mind could devise; and he was supported in his philippic by Sir Henry Cavendish, who reminded the House that the Independents of the past century commenced by seeming moderation, but ended by *cutting off the head of the king*; men might creep into the Volunteers, who might urge them to similar dangerous courses. But Grattan repelled the charges against the army in which he was a distinguished soldier—and told the Legislature that the great objects which they sought could not be obtained by the skill, the prudence, or the dexterity of 300 men, without the spirit and co-operation of 3,000,000. The military associations, he said, “caused a fortunate change in the sentiments of this House: they inspired us to ask directly for the greatest object that ever was set within the view of Ireland—a free trade.” The spirit in the country well replied to the spirit within the walls of the House. The Volunteers instructed the representatives to vote the supplies for no longer than six months. They now amounted to nearly 50,000 men. Possessed of every wonted military attributes,

disciplined, and well armed, they had other qualities that are too often absent in military organization. They were the army of the people; their commission included only the duties of free-born men to fight for liberty and to defend a country. Most of their officers were the highest blood of an ancient and aristocratic country—men not alone ennobled by long descent, but by the high qualities of genius, wisdom, and integrity. The soldiers were the yeomen of the land, having as definite an interest in her prosperity as the highest peer in the service. And all were bound together by the deepest attachment to the liberties of Ireland. They had seen what they were able to effect; and as concession after concession was wrung from power, the bold and sagacious of them determined not to rest from their efforts until a free and reformed Parliament sat within the walls of the Senate House, the permanent security and guarantee of freedom.

The question of the supplies came before the House on the 25th November, 1779. The "Patriots" had determined to withhold the grant, or to limit the duration of the money bill until free trade was yielded by England. But Scott, the Attorney-General, endeavoured to prove that supplies to pay the interest of the national debt, the tontine, and the loans were not supplies to the crown, but for the discharge of national responsibilities. "How tender," said Grattan, "the administration is regarding the moneyed interests of individuals; how little they care to risk the ruin of the nation!" The Attorney-General moved that the supplies should be granted for two years; Mr. French moved an amendment that they should be granted for six months. A brilliant debate was the consequence; the war of personality, which was always carried on with so much vigour and genius in the House, never raged with fiercer or more splendid power—but the great oration of the day was delivered by Hussey Burgh. He said:

"You have but two nights ago declared against new taxes by a majority of 123, and have left the ministers supported only by 47 votes; if you now go back, and accede to the proposed grant for two years, your compliance will add insult to the injuries already done to your ill-fated country; you strike a dagger in your own bosom, and destroy the fair prospect of commercial hope, because if the minister can, in the course of two days, render void the animated spirit and patriotic stability of this House, and procure a majority, the British minister will treat our applications for free trade with contempt. When the interests of the Government and the people are contrary, they secretly operate against each other—such a state is but smothered war. I shall be a friend alike to the minister and the people, according as I

find their desires guided by justice ; but at such a crisis as this, the people must be kept in good temper, even to the indulgence of their caprices.

“The usurped authority of a Foreign Parliament has kept up the most wicked laws that a zealous, monopolizing, ungrateful spirit could devise, to restrain the bounty of Providence, and enslave a nation whose inhabitants are recorded to be a brave, loyal, and generous people ; by the English code of laws, to answer the most sordid views, they have been treated with a savage cruelty ; the words penalty, punishment, and Ireland, are synonymous, they are marked in blood on the margin of their Statutes , and, though time may have softened the calamities of the nation, the baneful and destructive influence of those laws has borne her down to a state of Egyptian bondage. The English have sowed their laws like serpents’ teeth, and they have sprung up in armed men.”\*

The amendment was carried by 138 to 100 : the triumph of the principles of free trade was insured and the minister acknowledged the necessity of precipitately retracing his steps. Who can doubt the vast influence the Volunteers exerted in all these proceedings ? On the preceding 4th of November—the anniversary of the birth of William the Third—the Volunteers had taken the opportunity of reading to the Minister and the Parliament a lesson of constitutional doctrine around the statue of him who was, they conceived, the founder of constitutional liberty. They assembled in College Green—the Dublin Volunteer Artillery—commanded by James Napier Tandy, with labels bearing the inscription, “Free Trade or speedy revolution,” suspended on the necks of their cannon ; the Volunteers of Dublin and the vicinity, under the orders of the Duke of Leinster. The sides of the pedestal on which stood the statue of the Deliverer, were ornamented with collections of most significant political reasoning ; and under the angry eyes of the executive, such teachings as the following were given at once to the governors and the governed. On one side of the pillar was inscribed, “Relief to Ireland ;” on another, “A short money bill, a free trade, or else —— ;” on a third, “The Volunteers, *quingenta millia juncti parati pro patria mori* ;”

\* Hussey Burgh lost his place, but rose in popular estimation. Meetings were held in different parts of the country to present him with addresses of thanks. The freedom of the Corporation of Carrickfergus, and other corporate towns, was given to him in gold boxes. The address from the Carrickfergus Corporation was presented by Barry Yelverton, Recorder of the town.—See *Freeman’s Journal*, January 4th, 1780.



and in front of the statue were two cannons bearing an inscription on each, "Free trade or this." The people were assembled in thousands around the Volunteer troops, and their enthusiasm re-echoed in deafening applause the thunder of the artillery. It was a scene productive of commercial and political freedom; that the latter was evanescent was not the fault of the institution or lack of spirit; but divisions, and doubts, and suspicions, were introduced amongst the body by the exertions of England; new ambitions filled the minds of some; the force of old ministerial associations pressed upon others; the courtly tendencies and the timid alarms of a few of the leading men led them to sacrifice what they had gained, rather than to peril English connection by nobly seeking unlimited freedom. But at the period of which we are writing, the Volunteer system was compact and perfect. The wants of Ireland were commercial and political. She had been made a bankrupt by monopoly, and a slave by usurpation. The Volunteers were to give her prosperity and freedom, by unrestricted trade and legislation. And right well did they set themselves to their appointed task, with what success appears from Lord North's free trade bill, and Grattan's declaration of right.

It was appointed for Lord North to undo the work of William the Third, and to take the first step towards restoring the trade to which the Deliverer had given the finishing blow. Lord North had great experience in obstinate oppression, and not less in the recognition of the liberties he had trampled upon. He had braved the genius of Chatham in the disastrous campaigns against transatlantic freedom—the world has read with profit the sequel of his history in that great transaction. He had opposed every effort to emancipate the trade of Ireland—it is an agreeable duty for an Irish writer to detail the concessions wrung from him by the arms of the Volunteers, and the eloquence and genius of those who led them to victory. On the 13th of December, 1779, he introduced into the English Legislature three propositions: to permit, first, the export of glass; second, the export of woollen goods; and third, a free trade with the English settlements in America, the West Indies, and Africa.

In connection with these propositions, Foster, the Speaker of the Irish House, and on that occasion the representative of Government, on the 20th of the same month, moved two resolutions in the Irish Legislature. 1st, That the exportation of the manufactures of this country would tend to relieve her distresses. 2nd, That great commercial benefits would flow from the permission to trade with the American, Indian, and African settlements.

Propositions of very manifest truth, but tardily acknowledged by the English and Irish Governments, whose recognition is obviously attributable to a style of political reasoning which will prove any thing that a nation of men requires to demonstrate. The propositions of Lord North, and the resolutions of Foster, were the basis of the bill which some months later gave a free trade to Ireland; and, for the first time since William the Third destroyed the woollen manufacture, and his English Parliament laid restrictions on her productive industry, her people were free to use the resources a liberal nature offered them, and which a foreign tyrant sealed from their anxious hands. The efforts they had made hitherto to free their trade were the efforts of slaves—petition and remonstrance; it was not until they demanded free trade, with the Volunteer alternative, that England struck.

The Volunteers and the country had soon a more striking proof of the power which their attitude exerted over the obstinate maxims of English policy.

Lord North, in February, 1780, introduced his free trade bill in a speech which was the best refutation of his former arguments, and the severest condemnation of his former conduct.

The intelligence of the concessions made by that bill—liberty to export woollen manufactures, and to trade with the British colonies, was received with great joy by the people. But their joy was tempered with a wise care for the future, and the greater the conceded advantages were, the more did they feel themselves pressed by the insecurity of possession. The very magnitude of the gift taught them with greater force the true principles of freedom. They reflected that the right which jealous power had respected in its hour of weakness, it would trample on with recovered strength. What security had they that at some future period, when they had possibly established a thriving trade, and expended much labour and money in creating a prosperous commerce, there might not arise another William, ready to gratify the insolent avarice of England, by the destruction of their trade and manufactures? The wisdom of Swift, of Lucas and of Molyneux, appealed to them in the hour of recovered trade, and pleaded strongly for unrecovered liberty. They received a free trade then, not as a gift from bounty, but as a surrendered right from weakened power; and, rejoicing at the extent of the benefit, they were neither fools nor sycophants; nor did they compromise their duty to their country by a needless excess of gratitude to her frightened oppressor. Thus, in the resolutions which record the people's joy, we may find the strongest expressions of their determination to effect greater things than the emancipation of

their trade. Every county in Ireland addressed its representatives ; every corps of Volunteers addressed its officers ; and the spirit of these effusions may be judged from one, selected from amongst many, to which the spirit of the day gave birth. The gentlemen of the grand jury and freeholders of the county of Monaghan, addressing their representatives, amongst other things, said :—

“ While we rejoice in common with the rest of our fellow-subjects at the advantages which Ireland has latterly obtained, and which we are fully convinced are attributable to the parental attention of his Majesty, the virtue of our Parliament, and the spirit of our people ; yet, as these advantages are confined to commerce, our satisfaction must be limited, lest our rights and privileges should seem to be lost in the joy which attends a partial restoration of them. We do affirm that no Parliament had, has, or of right ought to have, any power or authority whatsoever, in this kingdom, *except the Parliament of Ireland* ; that no Statute has the force of law in this kingdom, unless enacted by the King with the consent of the Lords and Commons of the land ; on this principle the connection between Great Britain and Ireland is to be founded, and on this principle we trust, not only that it may be rendered secure and permanent, but that the two kingdoms may become strongly united and advantageously circumstanced, as to be enabled to oppose with success the common enemies of the British empire. What you have done we look on as a beginning ; and we trust that the termination of the Session will be as beneficial to the constitution as the commencement has been to the commerce of the country.”

These were the sentiments of manly but conditional loyalty, of generous love of freedom above even the material benefits of trade, which led to the Revolution of 1782, and whose diversion into other channels after the Volunteers had ceased to exist as a great national army, drove so many great and upright men into conspiracy and revolt.

The desire of constitutional liberty having once seized upon the people, several means of obtaining that object were adopted. In Parliament, a short mutiny bill became a favourite measure. The evils of a standing army, the dangers to freedom inseparable from the existence within the realm of a large force of armed men, having from its very organization no sympathies with the people, were eloquently dwelt upon by the leading “ Patriots” in the House ; magistrates refused to billet soldiers under a mutiny act, to which they objected on two grounds—first, that it was an



English act of Parliament, and secondly, that it was perpetual, and created an armed irresponsible authority within the State. The Irish mutiny act had only extended to six months—it had been returned from England with a change rendering it perpetual; thus the Legislation might well be called English, and the principle despotic. The act was resisted, and it would have remained a dead letter, but that the ultimate decision of the matter rested with the judges, and it was not thought advisable to resort to their tribunals. But the time had arrived when Henry Grattan commenced, in grave and noble earnest, the great quarrel of parliamentary liberty. And never was a man more fitted by nature for a great work than he was. Swift had written of Irish politics with masterly power; Molyneux, with considerable learning; and Lucas, with homely vigour and honest zeal; but in Henry Grattan all the qualities of greatness were combined. He was a man of a pure spirit and a noble genius. He was an accomplished scholar, and a poet; but his scholarship and his poetry gave way to a grand, peculiar, and electric oratory, unsurpassed, probably unequalled, by the greatest speakers of any age or nation. It was argumentative and logical in the highest degree; but it was also imaginative and picturesque. Its figures were bold and new—its striking peculiarity consisted in the total absence of the usual or the vulgar. In its noble flights, in the utter *abandonment* of genius, there was a grandeur and elegant proportion, a profound wisdom, and a startling vehemence, which contributed to give to the orator all the weight of inspiration. But Grattan was not only a consummate orator, he was a patriot in the largest and broadest sense, and was the first Statesman in Ireland who both aspired to national independence for his country, and perceived the impossibility of maintaining that independence, even if established, without associating the mass of proscribed Catholics in the national aspirations and national triumph.

The commercial tyranny of England being now broken down, and the country obviously ripe for a further advance, Grattan fixed the 19th of April, 1780, as the day on which he would move his celebrated Declaration of Right, which, if adopted, would be a distinct *ultimatum* to England, and, adopted in the front of the Volunteer array, would be an unmistakable challenge and defiance. The scene presented on that memorable day by Dublin and the Irish Parliament House on College Green is vividly described by MacNevin:—

“No greater day, none of more glory ever rose upon this country, than that which dawned upon the Senate House of Ireland

on the 19th of April, 1780. The dull chronicles of the time, and the meagre press which then represented popular opinion, are filled with details of the circumstances under which Grattan brought forward his Declaration of Right. They were circumstances certainly unequalled in our history of military splendour and moral triumph. The streets around the Attic temple of legislation were thronged with the disciplined numbers of the Volunteers, and the impatient multitude of the people. The uniforms of the Irish army, the gaudy orange, the brilliant scarlet and the chaster and more national green—turned up with different facings, according to the tastes of the various corps—contrasted gayly with the dark background of the civilian mass that watched with eager eyes the extraordinary scene. Over the heads of the crowd floated the banners of the Volunteers, with the watchwords of freedom and political regeneration worked in gold or silver on a ground of blue, green, or white. And truly the issue to be tried within the walls of that magnificent building was one great in its effects, and illustrious from the character of the contending parties. It was a trial of right between two great nations—but more, it was to be either a precedent of freedom or an argument of usurpation. Much depended on the result, not alone as to the present interests, but as to the future destinies of the country; and the great men who were engaged in conducting this controversy of liberty were fully alive to the dignity of their parts, and fully competent to the successful discharge of the lofty mission they had undertaken.

“Within the walls of the House of Commons, a scene of great interest presented itself to the eye. The galleries were thronged with women of the first fashion, beautiful, elegantly dressed, and filled with animated interest in the anticipated triumph of an eloquence to which the place was sacred. Scattered through the House were several officers of the Volunteers, for a considerable number of the members held commissions in that great body. But the chief attractions of the House were those distinguished men who were upon that day to make the noblest chapter in the history of Ireland—men celebrated beyond those of almost any age for the possession of the highest of man’s qualities—eloquence, wit, statesmanship, political wisdom, and unbounded knowledge. There were to be seen and heard there that day the graceful and eloquent Burgh; the intrepid advocate, the consummate orator, the immaculate patriot John Philpot Curran; the wise statesman, Flood; and the founder of Irish liberty, who watched it in its cradle, and who followed it to its grave, Grattan. Amongst the spectators were Lifford, the chancellor, whose voice had negatived

every liberty, and denied every concession: Charlemont, the truest of "patriots," but the worst of Statesmen; and Frederick, the Earl of Bristol and Bishop of Derry, whose coronet and mitre could not keep down the ambition of a tribune, nor conceal the finest qualities of a demagogue. All eyes were turned to Grattan."

"After a speech of consummate power in which he imparted to the doctrines of freedom a more spiritual cast than they had yet assumed in Ireland, he moved his three resolutions. 1st, That his most excellent Majesty, by and with the consent of the Lords and Commons of Ireland, are the only power competent to enact laws to bind Ireland. 2nd, That the Crown of Ireland is, and ought to be, inseparably annexed to the Crown of Great Britain. 3rd, That Great Britain and Ireland are inseparably united under one sovereign, by the common and indissoluble ties of interest, loyalty, and freedom. His resolutions were seconded by Robert Stewart, the father of the man who, of all others, was most active in destroying the great fabric of freedom which Henry Grattan commenced upon that day to rear. He was opposed by Foster and Fitzgibbon; and to show how completely Irish freedom was the child of arms, the latter attacked the Volunteers as a giddy faction, which dealt in violence and clamour. He felt that Grattan was indeed fortified by the resolutions of the armed citizens, and accordingly was liberal of invective against them. Yet Fitzgibbon represented himself as an enemy to the usurpations of England. It was singular that on this occasion Flood was opposed to bringing forward the question of Irish liberty. He thought that the time of England's distress was an improper one at which to urge the rights of Ireland."

The eloquent writer just cited has been somewhat carried away by his enthusiastic sympathy with the great effort of Grattan, and exaggerates its importance. The debate, it is true, was extremely interesting; and if it led to no immediate practical result in the House, it kept the subject alive before the nation, and gave it fresh vitality and power. It seems that scarcely any member, with perhaps one or two exceptions, ventured to oppose directly the principles of the resolutions. The Castle party, however, defeated them by a motion, that there being an equivalent resolution already on the journals of the House (alluding to one in Strafford's time, which was *not* equivalent), it was useless to pass this. The amendment was carried, and the Declaration of Right was not pressed at that time to a division. Plowden thus sums up the result:—

"After a most interesting debate, that lasted till six o'clock



in the morning, in which every man but one acknowledged its truth, either expressly or by not opposing it, Mr. Flood, who well knew that the ministerial members were committed to negative the motion if it came to a division, recommended that no question should be put, and no appearance of the business entered on the journals, to which Mr. Grattan consented."

Substantially, however, the object of the Declaration was accomplished. If it did not convince the ministerial members, it convinced the Volunteers, and made more Volunteers. It also convinced the Government of the depth and strength of the new national spirit in Ireland, as we learn from a letter of Lord Buckinghamshire, the day after, to Lord Hillsborough. He says: "It is with the utmost concern I must acquaint your Lordship that, although so many gentlemen expressed their concern that the subject had been introduced, the sense of the House against the obligation of *any Statutes* of the Parliament of Great Britain, within this kingdom, is represented to me to have been almost unanimous."

The people out of doors began now to be grievously discontented with their Parliament. They were becoming more and more thoroughly indoctrinated with the generous sentiments of Grattan, not only through his own speeches and essays, but by means of the brilliant pamphlets of Mr. Pollock, published under the name of Owen Roe O'Neill, who entered very fully into the grievances of the country, and went the whole length of the claim to legislative independence. Indeed, it became evident that, without legislative independence, no concessions in respect of freedom of trade or anything else could be relied upon as either efficient or permanent.

After the first burst of triumph over the commercial reforms of Lord North, it was found, on examination and trial, that the law had been so contrived as to render the concessions nearly illusory. Especially in the matter of the trade in refined sugar, it was seen that the new law, and a treacherous addition which had been made to it after its passage in the British Parliament, tended to destroy the sugar refineries of Ireland, then an important branch of industry; and a petition was presented by the town of Newry, not only exposing this contrivance, but also adverting earnestly to what was now become the chief Parliamentary topic, the "Mutiny Bill." In short, the aroused spirit of the people demanded that the principle of English domination in Ireland should be assailed at every point; and in nothing was that principle so momentous and so menacing as in the practice of governing the standing army of Ireland (12,000 to 15,000 strong)

by a perpetual mutiny act passed in England. So charmed, however, was the Parliament with its small and doubtful success in the matter of free trade, that it not only liberally granted the supplies for a year and a half longer, but agreed to the English Mutiny Bill, which was perpetual, by a majority of fifty-two. In short, it was plain that this Parliament, so extensively corrupted and so well disciplined by the Castle influence (that is, by the corrupt expenditure of the people's money), could not be relied upon to realize the lofty aspiration of the nation. Absolute national independence was now their fixed purpose.

The year 1780 was one of incessant organization; reviews took place throughout all Ireland; and a great provincial meeting was appointed for the November of that year, previous to which in all parts of the country the Volunteer corps were reviewed by the commanding officers in each district. The Earl of Belvidere reviewed the troops of Westmeath; the Limerick and Clare Volunteers were reviewed by Lord Kingsborough; the Londonderry by Lord Erne; the Volunteers of the South by Lord Shannon; those of Wicklow by Lord Kingsborough; and the Volunteers of Dublin county and city, who had formed themselves into associated corps, by Lord Carysfort, Sir Edward Newenham, and other men of rank, patriotism, and fortune. These reviews were attended with every circumstance of brilliancy. There was no absence of the pomp of war. The Volunteers had supplied themselves with artillery, tents, and all the requisites of the field. They had received many presents of ordnance; numerous stands of colours had been presented to them, with no absence of ceremony and splendour, by women of the highest station and figure in the country, whose pride it was to attend the reviews in their handsomest equipages and clothed in their gayest attire.

Until the middle of the year 1780, the Volunteers had acted in independent troops and companies, only linked together by their community of feeling and design: but it was apparent that for any general movement, for any grand military measure (which every day seemed to render more imminent), they needed a closer organization and a commander-in-chief. Their choice fell upon James Caulfield, Earl of Charlemont, the descendant of one of the adventurers who had come over in Queen Elizabeth's reign, and had been rewarded for his exertions in helping to crush O'Neill, by large grants of confiscated estates. This Earl of Charlemont was a man of limited capacity, but of much cultivation. He had travelled much, had written Italian sonnets, and collected busts and intaglios. He had been nine years absent from Ireland, and

returned just as the contest between Primate Stone and Henry Boyle was calming down into the disgrace of one and the corruption of the other.

Lord Charlemont's first Irish services were neither splendid nor honourable. He was chosen as the negotiator between Boyle and the Lord Lieutenant. His duty was to strike a balance between what the Irish patriot wanted and the English official would give; and he was eminently successful in eliciting harmony from the jarrings of sordid ambition and Castle economy. But he soon left the Castle sphere—though well fitted by taste and feeling to be a courtier, it should be with honour—and that was an impossible fact in Ireland. It is said by Hardy, that Lord Charlemont was ignorant of the bargain struck between Boyle and the Lord Lieutenant, by which the former got a pension;\* but there was enough of profligacy in the concessions made by both parties, even though money had never changed hands between them, to take all glory from the office of negotiator.

As commander-in-chief, however, of the Volunteers, he made not only a dignified and ornamental standard-bearer, but a very active military organizer. He was great in reviews; and on the whole did his official duty well; but he never could expand his mind wide enough to grasp the idea of associating in the new nation the two millions of Catholics.

In replying to the address communicating to him his election as commander-in-chief, he states with so much clearness and perspicuity the position occupied by the Volunteers, the services they had rendered, and the spirit which animated them, that the reply is here presented in full as a perfect vindication of "that illustrious, adored, and abused body of men."

GENTLEMEN,—You have conferred on me an honour of a very new and distinguished nature,—to be appointed, without any solicitation on my part, the reviewing-general of an independent army, *raised by no other call than that of public virtue*; an army which costs nothing to the State, and has produced every thing to the nation, is what no other country has it in her power to bestow. Honoured by such a delegation I obeyed it with cheerfulness. The inducement was irresistible; I felt it the duty of every subject to forget impediments which would have stood in the way of a similar attempt in any other cause.

I see with unspeakable pleasure the progress of your discipline, and the increase of your associations; the indefatigable, steady, and extraordinary exertions, to which I have been a witness, afford a sufficient proof, that, in the formation of an army, public spirit, a shame of being outdone, and the ambition to excel, *will supply the place of reward and punishment—can levy an army, and bring it to perfection.*

\* Life of Charlemont, vol. i., p. 93.



The pleasure I feel is increased, when I reflect that your associations are not the fashion of a day, but the settled purpose and durable principle of the people; from whence I foresee, that the advantages lately acquired will be ascertained and established, and that solid and permanent strength will be added to the empire.

I entirely agree in the sentiment you express with regard to the exclusive authority of the legislature of this kingdom. I agree also in the expediency of making the assertion; it is no more than the law will warrant, and the real friends of both nations subscribe.

I have the honour to be, Gentlemen,

Your most obliged, faithful, and

obedient humble servant,

July 15, 1780.

CHARLEMONT.

The provincial reviews which followed the election of Lord Charlemont, were intended to convey significantly to the minister the readiness of an armed nation to second the propositions of their leaders in Parliament. Lord Charlemont visited Belfast to review the Ulster regiments, and was attended by Sir Annesley Stewart and Grattan as his aides. He was met at Hillsborough by Mr. Dobbs, Mr. Hamilton, and Mr. Stewart, afterwards the Marquis of Londonderry. His arrival at Belfast on the 11th of July was announced by a salute of seven guns from the artillery, which was answered by the ships in the harbour; and there followed a brilliant review of 3,000 men.

The despatches of Lord Buckinghamshire to Lord North at this period, are evidences of a system of downright bribery—for the purpose of retaining and insuring his parliamentary majority—so general and so profuse, that nothing could bear comparison with it, but the worse corruption by which the Union was carried. Between September 8th, 1780, and November 19th of the same year, the Lord Lieutenant forwarded several despatches to the English minister, in which he recommends over one hundred men of rank and fortune, and some of their wives, to rewards for past services, or to bribes for prospective services. Sir Robert Deane, an uniform and laborious drudge, impeded by no conscience and burdened by no principle, who, as his viceregal eulogist remarks, always with *firm friends* supported Government and never *suggested a difficulty*, was recommended for a peerage. Several other men with similar services to parade, with just the same degree of conscience or principle, had their claims for a degraded honour allowed by the Lord Lieutenant.\*

\* The sources of patrician honours in Ireland, it is much to be regretted, are very impure and tainted. From this censure must of course be excepted the ancient aristocracy of the land, in whose veins still runs an honourable stream, uncontaminated by the impurity of the Williamite, or Union creation.

The despatches of this Viceroy in these two months (September and October, 1780) are extant, and should be rendered familiar reading to all those who are disposed to trust in the integrity and the promises of English Statesmen.\* In the Houses, both of Lords and Commons, his management was too successful, and the people now looked upon Parliament as their worst enemy. On the 2nd of September, 1780, Lord Buckinghamshire prorogued the servile Parliament with one of those speeches, half cant and half sarcasm, which were then, and are now, the usual kind of viceregal addresses in Ireland. He thanked the House for their "liberal supplies" (for which the people cursed them), and added, "your cheerfulness in giving them, and your attention to the ease of the subject in the mode of raising them, must be very acceptable to his Majesty; on my part, I assure you *they shall be faithfully applied.*" To both Houses he said that "the heart of every Irishman must exult at the fair scene of prosperity now opening to his country," congratulated them on the commercial relaxations, which he called "the diffusive indulgence of his

The successive creations in Cromwell's and William's time, and at the Union, deepen in infamy as they approach our own days. The parties recommended for honours in Lord Buckinghamshire's profligate despatches, some of whose names are inserted in this note, have different qualifications; one is poor, another who is rich has poor relations; there is no political profligate, however wealthy or embarrassed, that is not recommended for promotion or pay, in his own person or in that of some convenient relative. Amongst the rest, Lords Mountcashel, Enniskillen, Carlow, and Farnham, are recommended for earldoms. In the general recommendations are the names of James Carigue Ponsonby, Charles Henry Cooke, Francis Bernard Beamish, Ponsonby Tottenham, James Somerville, William Caulfield, Thomas Nesbitt, Sir Boyle Roche, Dame Jane Heron, and other honourable persons. The following is curious, it is in a letter to Lord Hillsborough from the Lord Lieutenant:—

"With respect to the noblemen and gentlemen whose requests have not succeeded, I must say that no man can see the inconvenience of increasing the number of Peers more forcibly than myself, *but the recommendation of many of those persons submitted to his Majesty for that honour, arose FROM ENGAGEMENTS TAKEN UP AT THE PRESS OF THE MOMENT, TO SECURE QUESTIONS UPON WHICH THE ENGLISH GOVERNMENT WERE VERY PARTICULARLY ANXIOUS.* My sentiments cannot but be the same with respect to the Privy Council and pensions, and *I had not contracted any absolute engagements of recommendation either to peerage or pension, TILL DIFFICULTIES AROSE which necessarily occasioned so much and so forcibly communicated anxiety in his Majesty's cabinet, that I must have been culpable in NEGLECTING ANY POSSIBLE MEANS OF SECURING A MAJORITY IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.* Mr. Townshend was particularly recommended to me by Lord Shannon for a seat in the Privy Council, and I have reason to think his Lordship is extremely anxious for his success."

\* They are to be found in Grattan's Life, by his son, vol. ii.

Majesty ;" and so took his leave both of that Parliament and of Ireland. Fortunately, the cause of Ireland at that day rested neither upon him nor upon them. He was recalled soon after ; and on the 23rd of December, 1780, Lord Carlisle was appointed in his place.

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## CHAPTER XX.

1781—1782.

THERE is small interest in following the details of Parliamentary business during the first year of Lord Carlisle's Viceroyalty ; because it was every day more evident that the power which would decide the destinies of the country lay outside the walls of Parliament. Indeed, on the discussion of the perpetual Mutiny Bill for Ireland, Grattan had declared that if it passed into law he would secede, and appeal to the people, a formidable threat at a moment when the people were in such a good condition to hear and decide such an appeal. Lord Carlisle was accompanied by Mr. Eden as secretary, a man already known by his unsuccessful diplomacy in America, and known also by his hostility to the pretensions of Ireland. He had written and published a letter "*On the Representations of Ireland respecting a Free Trade,*" of which Mr. Dobbs, a staunch patriot, thus writes: "From a letter written by Mr. Eden, secretary to Lord Carlisle, on the subject of Irish affairs, and which had been answered by Counsellor Richard Sheridan, we had no great reason to rejoice at this change."\*

On the 9th of October, 1781, the Earl of Carlisle met the Parliament. There was the usual common-place speech, recommending the Protestant Charter Schools ; the linen trade ; assuring Parliament of his Majesty's ardent wishes for the happiness, &c., of the Irish people ; and even speaking complacently of the "spirited offers of assistance" which had lately been made to the Government from every part of the kingdom, which was, though without naming them, a kind of compliment to the Volunteers. Mr. O'Neill moved a servile address in reply. Mr. Grattan, who had no idea of suffering any neglect or disrespect to the Volunteers, took notice of the extreme caution with which the address avoided mentioning the word *Volunteer*, that wholesome and salutary appellation which he wished to familiarize to the royal

\* Dobbs' Hist. of Irish Affairs.



ear; he would not, however, insist on having it inserted, as he had reason to believe the right honourable mover did intend to make a proper mention of those protectors of their country.

Mr. O'Neill declared he was not deceived in this opinion, that the motion to which he had alluded was intended to thank the Volunteers of Ireland for that glorious spirit, unexampled in all history, with which they had so eagerly pressed forward, when the nation was thought to be in danger. He then moved that the thanks of the House should be given to all the Volunteers of Ireland, for their exertions and continuance, and for their loyal spirited declarations on the late expected invasion.

Mr. Conolly seconded the motion. After some opposition from Mr. Fitzgibbon, the thanks of the House were voted unanimously.

The very next day an important bill was moved for. Ireland had never yet enjoyed the protection of a *Habeas Corpus* act; nor, indeed, has she ever enjoyed it until this day, because that law has been regularly suspended in Ireland precisely at the times when it was most needed.

On the 10th of October, 1781, Mr. Bradstreet, the recorder, a very staunch patriot, moved in the House of Commons for leave to bring in the heads of a *Habeas Corpus* bill, prefacing his motion by observing that the liberty and safety of the subjects of Ireland were insecure until a *Habeas Corpus* act should take place; that arbitrary power had made great strides and innovations on public liberty, but was effectually restrained by that law which had its full operation in England, but did not exist in Ireland. It was, he said, the opinion of a great and learned judge, that this law was the grand bulwark of the constitution. Leave was granted; and Mr. Yelverton and the recorder were ordered to prepare and bring in the same.

Some few other proceedings in this session deserve to be noticed. Mr. Grattan again endeavoured to procure an act for limitation of the Mutiny Act. Sir Lucius O'Brien moved for redress in the matter of Irish trade with Portugal; and the guild of merchants presented a petition stating that the great advantages which the nation had been promised by a freedom of trade to all the world were likely to prove imaginary; as from the state of general war our commerce was confined to very few nations, and amongst them the kingdom of Portugal, from which the greatest hopes had been conceived, had refused to receive our manufactures, quantities of which were then lying stopped in the custom-house of Lisbon, and praying the House to interfere for redress. The influence of the Court party, which was still para-

mount on most questions, was sufficient to prevent any effectual action on these subjects. The principal care, indeed, of the new Viceroy and his adriot secretary was to prevent or suppress discussion upon any subject which would tend to open up the great national question of independence. Mr. Barry Yelverton, speaking of this motion on the Portuguese trade, said he "thought there had been some design in the speech, to lead their imaginations away from this important object; it had, indeed, talked of Protestant Charter schools, making of roads, digging of canals, and carrying of corn; and contained half a dozen lines that might be found in every speech for fifty years past; subjects more proper for the inquiry of a county grand jury, than for the great inquest of the nation; but not one word of our trade to Portugal; that had been designedly omitted."

The same Mr. Yelverton gave notice of a motion to bring in a bill to regulate the transmission of bills to England; in other words, for a repeal of Poynings' Law. Many of the "Prtriots" now saw that the mind and spirit of the nation were firmly bent on one great purpose; and accordingly they began to be desirous, each to have his own name well forward as a mover in the good work. But before Yelverton's motion, arrived official news of that most happy and propitious event—the surrender of Lord Cornwallis and his army to the French and Americans at Yorktown. With a polite affectation of grief, Yelverton abandoned his motion, and moved instead an address to the King expressive of sympathy and unalterable attachment, "and to entreat his Majesty to believe, that we hold it to be our indispensable duty, as it is our most hearty inclination, cheerfully to support his Majesty to the utmost of our abilities, in all such measures as can tend to defeat the confederacy of his Majesty's enemies, and to restore the blessings of a lasting and honourable peace."

Several friends of Mr. Yelverton's, conceiving that his motion would commit them into an approbation and support of the American war, on that account alone declined supporting it: the question, however, being put, the motion was carried by a majority of 167 against 37.

In this Session, also, Mr. Grattan made an *exposé* of the financial condition of the country. This speech led to no action, but is worth some attention, because it shows to what a hopeless state of embarrassment, or rather national ruin, Ireland had been reduced. As usual, Grattan spoke with bold and bitter personal allusion, careless of the fact that perhaps a majority of his auditors were themselves corrupt pensioners on the public treasury. "Your debt," said he, "including annuities, is £2,667,600; of

this debt, in the last fourteen years, you have borrowed above £1,900,000, in the last eight years above £1,500,000, and in the last two years £910,090. I state not only the fact of your debt, but the progress of your accumulation, to show the rapid mortality of your distemper, the accelerated velocity with which you advance to ruin; and if the question stood alone on this ground, it would stand firm; for I must further observe, that if this enormous debt be the debt of the peace establishment, not accumulated by directing the artillery of your arms against a foreign enemy, but by directing the artillery of your treasury against your constitution, it is a debt of patronage and prostitution."

He next went into an account of the revenues and expenditures of the kingdom; showed that the increase of expenses for two years amounted to £550,000, while the increase of revenue for the same two years was but £60,000; and that this profligate system was only confirmed and aggravated each succeeding year. Then he proceeded—"I have stated your expenses as exceeding your income, £484,000, and as having increased in fourteen years above half a million. As to the application of your money, I am ashamed to state it; let the minister defend it; let him defend the scandal of giving pensions, directly or indirectly, to the first of the nobility, with as little honour to them who receive, as to the king who gives. Let him defend the minute corruption, which in small bribes and annuities, leaves honourable gentlemen poor, while it makes them dependent."

On the 11th of December, Mr. Flood, who was anxious that he also should be on the record prominently against the obnoxious Poyning's Law, brought forward a motion for the appointment of a committee "to explain the law of Poynings." He made a learned and statesmanlike speech, was answered by a Court Member; and his motion was voted down by 139 against 67.

This same Session an effort was made by Mr. Luke Gardiner (afterwards Lord Mountjoy) to procure a measure of relief for the Catholics. This gentleman, like Lord Charlemont, had lately returned from a residence on the Continent; and had often lamented since his return, that Ireland, he was ashamed to confess, was the most intolerant country, Catholic or Protestant, in all the world. On the 13th of December he gave notice of his intention to bring in the heads of a bill for some mitigation of the Penal Laws. A few days after, when Mr. Gardiner introduced the subject again, Grattan warmly and eagerly gave his support in advance to some large and just measure, including both Catholics and Dissenters, declaring emphatically that "it should be the



business of Parliament to unite every denomination of Irishmen in brotherly affection and regard to the Constitution." Every denomination of Irishmen! Including Catholics! It was new language in that House: it was the first time perhaps, since King James's Parliament, that there had been so much as a hint of treating Catholics and Protestants as on an equal footing before the law. No wonder that it disquieted Cromwellian squires. Sir Richard Johnson nervously protested at once "that he would oppose any bill by which Papists were permitted to bear arms."

That Henry Grattan's idea, though not then fully developed did go the full length of absolute equality, may be inferred from a remarkable passage in the end of his short speech. "It had been well observed by a gentleman of first-rate understanding (a Member of the British Parliament), that Ireland could never prosper till its inhabitants were a people; and though the assertion might seem strange, that three millions of inhabitants in that island should not be called a people, yet the truth was so, and so would continue till the wisdom of Parliament should unite them by all the bonds of social affection. Then, and not till then, the country might hope to prosper."

This bill of Mr. Gardiner, which was very cautious and modest, merely relaxing a little further the rigours of the laws which debarred Catholics from having property and from educating their children, was postponed from week to week, and was still pending when the great event of the century (for Ireland) took place in the parish church of Dungannon, in the county Tyrone. It should be mentioned that there was great difference of opinion among the Volunteers with respect to any, indulgence whatever shown to Papists; and that in particular the Sligo Volunteers, commanded by Mr. Wynne, addressed their colonel, requiring him to use his influence to defeat the measure. The conduct of these Sligo Volunteers is admirably rebuked, and the contrast of their professions and their intolerance delineated with great power and severity in a series of letters in the *Free-man's Journal* of the day, beginning with the date of the 19th of of January, 1782.

But the cause of the country was now removed into another and a higher court than that of the corrupt Parliament. All the year 1781 had been a time of active organization for the Volunteers: the companies had been formed into regiments, many thousands of Catholics were now gathered into the organization; numerous reviews continued to be held; and it was determined that the regiments should now be brigaded. On the 28th of

December, 1781, the officers and delegates of the First Ulster regiment, commanded by Lord Charlemont, met at Armagh, and resolved to hold a *Convention* of the Ulster delegates at Dungannon. It was the idea of Grattan: he had failed in his endeavour to join issue with England by his Declaration of Right in Parliament, and resolved now to put himself upon the country. Both friends and enemies of the Irish national cause were almost bewildered by the boldness of this conception—"Will nobody stop that madman, Grattan?" cried Edmund Burke. The Castle, on its side, hoped that this armed Convention would put itself in the wrong by some intemperate violence or plain illegality. In fact, the language of the resolutions passed at the preliminary meeting in Armagh was startling.

"*Resolved*, That with the utmost concern, we behold the little attention paid to the consitutional rights of this kingdom, by the majority of those whose duty it is to establish and preserve the same.

"*Resolved*, That to avert the impending danger from the nation, and to restore the constitution to its original purity, the most vigorous and effective methods, must be pursued, to root out corruption and Court influence from the legislative body.

"*Resolved*, That to open a path towards the attaining of this desirable point, it is absolutely requisite that a meeting be held in the most central town of the province of Ulster, which we conceive to be Dungannon, to which said meeting every Volunteer association of the said province is most earnestly requested to send delegates, then and there to deliberate on the present alarming situation of public affairs, and to determine on, and publish to their country, what may be the result of sai meeting.

"*Resolved*, That as many real and lasting advantages may arise to this kingdom, from said intended meeting being held before the present Session of Parliament is much farther advanced, Friday the 15th day of February next, at ten o'clock in the forenoon, is hereby appointed for said meeting, at Dungannon as aforesaid."

Dungannon was then, and is still, but a small market town of Tyrone County, about six miles from the shore of Lough Neagh. Two hundred years before, it had been the chief seat and stronghold of Hugh O'Neill, high-chief of Tyr-eoghain, who was the most formidable enemy that English power had ever encountered in Ireland. The little town had no assembly-room capable of accommodating the meeting; and it was determined to use the parish church for that purpose. On the 15th of February, from every county of Ulster, the delegates met. They represented thirty thousand armed men; and felt that they had full power

and credentials to deliberate and decide for a great army, not only for the Ulster Volunteers, but for those of all Ireland. What might they not have done on that day! England had suffered deep humiliation, and was truly in imminent peril. In America, after the surrender of Cornwallis, she could not strike another blow. She was still at war, both with France and with Spain. In Ireland it would have been impossible for her to place in the field one half the number of the Volunteer army; and even of that half, the Irish regular force would without doubt have fraternized with the Volunteers—"Had they chosen that mode of action," says Thomas MacNevin, "which many amongst them might have secretly thought the path of wisdom, as the path of honour, the result on the destinies of England would have been perilous indeed. We cannot doubt the issue of a war. A national army, composed of the flower of a bold and valiant people, treading their native and familiar soil, fighting for home and liberty, commanded by the most distinguished men in the country, numerous and disciplined, and impatient for the field—no mercenary soldiers, whose mean incentive was pay and plunder, and rapine, and hereditary hatred, could have withstood their glorious onslaught." But other, and more moderate counsels prevailed; "perhaps wiser," says Mr. MacNevin.

Of the resolutions prepared for the adoption of the military delegates, the first was written by Grattan, and the second by Flood. Mr. Dobbs, of Carrickfergus, was just about to start for the Convention, when Grattan, the unchanging friend of the Catholics, thrust into his hand the resolution in their favour, which afterwards passed at Dungannon with only two dissenting voices of benighted Protestants.

On the memorable 15th of February, 1782, "the church of Dungannon was full to the door." The representatives of the regiments of Ulster—one hundred and forty-three corps—marched to the sacred place of meeting, two and two, dressed in various uniforms and fully armed. Deeply they felt the great responsibilities which had been committed to their prudence and courage; but they were equal to their task, and had not lightly pledged their faith to a trustful country. The aspect of the church, the temple of religion, in which nevertheless no grander ceremony was ever performed, was imposing, or, it might be said, sublime. Never, on that hill where ancient piety had fixed its seat, was a nobler offering made to God than this, when two hundred of the elected warriors of a people assembled in His tabernacle, to lay the deep foundations of a nation's liberty. Colonel Irwin, a gentleman of rank, a man firm and cautious, of undoubted courage but great



prudence, presided as chairman. The following resolutions were then passed :—

“ *Whereas*, it has been asserted that Volunteers, as such cannot with propriety debate, or publish their opinions on political subjects. or on the conduct of Parliament or political men.

“ *Resolved*, unanimously, That a citizen by learning the use of arms dose not abandon any of his civil rights.

“ *Resolved*, unanimously, That a claim of any body of men, other than the King, Lords, and Commons of Ireland, to make laws to bind this kingdom, is unconstitutional, illegal, and a grievance.

“ *Resolved*, with one dissenting voice only, That the powers exercised by the privy councils of both kingdoms, under, or under colour, or pretence of, the law of Poyning’s are unconstitutional, and a grievance.

“ *Resolved*, unanimously, That the ports of this country are by right open to all foreign countries not at war with the King ; and that any burden thereupon, or obstruction thereto, save only by the Parliament of Ireland, are unconstitutional, illegal, and a grievance.

“ *Resolved*, with one dissenting voice only, That a Mutiny Bill not limited in point of duration, from session to session, is unconstitutional and a grievance.

“ *Resolved*, unanimously, That the independence of judges is equally essential to the impartial administration of justice in Ireland as in England, and that the refusal or delay of this right to Ireland, makes a distinction where there should be no distinction, may excite jealousy where perfect union should prevail, and is in itself unconstitutional and a grievance.

“ *Resolved*, with eleven dissenting voices only, That it is our decided and unalterable determination to seek a redress of these grievances, and we pledge ourselves to each other and to our country, as freeholders, fellow-citizens, and men of honour, that we will, at every ensuing election, support those only who have supported and will support us therein, and that will use all constitutional means to make such our pursuit of redress, speedy and effectual.

“ *Resolved*, with one dissenting voice only, That the right honourable and honourable the minority in Parliament, who have supported these our constitutional rights, are entitled to our most grateful thanks, and that the annexed address be signed by the chairman, and published with these resolutions.

“ *Resolved*, unanimously, That four Members from each county of the province of Ulster, eleven to be a quorum, be and are

hereby appointed a committee, till the next general meeting, to act for the Volunteer corps here represented, and, as occasion shall require, to call general meetings of the province, viz. :—

Lord Viscount Enniskillen,  
Col. Mervyn Archdall,  
Col. William Irvine,  
Col. Robert M'Clintock,  
Col. John Ferguson,  
Col. John Montgomery,  
Col. Charles Leslie,  
Col. Francis Lucas,  
Col. Thomas M. Jones,  
Col. James Hamilton,  
Col. Andrew Thomson,  
Lient-Col. C. Nesbitt,  
Lient-Col. A. Stewart,  
Major James Patterson,  
Major Francis Dobbs,  
Major James M'Clintock,

Major Charles Duffen,  
Capt. John Harvey,  
Capt. Robert Campbell,  
Capt. Joseph Pollock,  
Capt. Waddel Cunningham,  
Capt. Francis Evans,  
Capt. John Cope,  
Capt. James Dawson,  
Capt. James Acheson,  
Capt. Daniel Eccles,  
Capt. Thomas Dickson,  
Capt. David Bell,  
Capt. John Coulson,  
Capt. Robert Black,  
Rev. William Crawford,  
Mr. Robert Thompson.

“*Resolved*, unanimously, That said committee do appoint nine of their Members to be a committee in Dublin, in order to communicate with such other Volunteer associations in the other provinces as may think proper to come to similar resolutions, and to deliberate with them on the most constitutional means of carrying them into effect.

“In consequence of the above resolutions, the committee have appointed the following gentlemen for said committee, three to be a quorum, viz. :—

Col. Mervyn Archdall,  
Col. William Irvine,  
Col. John Montgomery,  
Col. Thomas M. Jones,

Major Francis Dobbs,  
Capt. Francis Evans,  
Capt. James Dawson,  
Capt. Joseph Pollock,

Mr. Robert Thompson.

“*Resolved*, unanimously, That the committee be, and are hereby instructed to call a general meeting of the province, within twelve months from this day, or in fourteen days after the dissolution of the present Parliament, should such an event sooner take place.

“*Resolved*, unanimously, That the court of Portugal has acted towards this kingdom, being a part of the British empire, in such a manner, as to call upon us to declare, and pledge ourselves to each other, that we will not consume any wine of the growth of Portugal, and that we will, to the extent of our influence, prevent the use of said wine, save and except the wine at present in this kingdom, until such time as our exports shall be

received in the kingdom of Portugal, as the manufactures of part of the British empire.

*“Resolved*, with two dissenting voices only to this and the following resolution, That we hold the right of private judgment, in matters of religion, to be equally sacred in others as ourselves.

*“Resolved*, therefore, That as men and as Irishmen, as Christians and as Protestants, we rejoice in the relaxation of the penal laws against our Roman Catholic fellow-subjects, and that we conceive the measure to be fraught with the happiest consequences to the union and prosperity of the inhabitants of Ireland.”

Some formal resolutions followed, of thanks to Lord Charlemont, to Colonel Dawson, who had been active in getting up the Convention, and to Colonel Irwin. The meeting terminated by the adoption of an address to the “Patriot” minorities in the Lords and Commons, remarkable for its comprehensive brevity and admirably succinct eloquence :—

“MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN.—We thank you for your noble and spirited, though hitherto ineffectual efforts, in defence of the great constitutional and commercial rights of your country. Go on. The almost unanimous voice of the people is with you ; and in a free country the voice of the people must prevail. We know our duty to our Sovereign, and are loyal. We know our duty to ourselves, and are resolved to be free. We seek for our rights, and no more than our rights ; and, in so just a pursuit, we should doubt the being of a Providence if we doubted of success.

“Signed by order,

“WILLIAM IRVINE, Chairman.”

Such were the proceedings at Dungannon. All Ireland adopted the resolutions ; and meetings were held in every county formally to accept the exposition of the public mind which the Volunteers of Ulster had given. The freeholders of each county, and the grand juries adopted the resolutions.

The delegates of Connaught met in pursuance of the requisition of Lord Clanricarde ; the delegates of Munster assembled at Cork under the presidency of Lord Kingsborough, and the delegates of Leinster at Dublin under that of Colonel Henry Flood.

It was in vain that the Government renewed its old cabals, or made overt resistance to the progress of the Dungannon movement. The example of the North was followed in every quarter. And what is peculiarly worthy of notice in the history of the day is this, that there was no diversity of opinion amongst the armed battalions in the different parts of the country. Such



division of opinion, especially on the subject of the Catholics, might naturally have been expected; but the result was one of great and singular unanimity on the important topics which agitated the public mind. The Dungannon resolutions constitute the charter of Irish freedom, embracing all the points necessary for the perfect independence of the country, legislative freedom, control over the army, religious equality, and freedom of trade. They are the summary of the political requisitions of the "Patriot" party in the Parliament for which they had been struggling since the days of Molyneux, for which it was vain to struggle until an armed force was ready to take the field in their behalf. And no one can read the history of this great Convention without feeling that it was virtually a declaration of war, with the alternative of full concession of all the points of the charter of liberty. The Dungannon delegates were empowered by the nation, speaking through her armed citizens, to make terms or to enforce her rights; a hundred thousand swords were ready to obey their commands. England could not have brought into the field one-half that number; and the rights of Ireland were virtually declared on the 15th of February. It was a marvellous moderation which contented itself with constitutional liberty in a political connection with England, and subjection to her monarch; it would not have required another regiment to have struck off the last link of subjugation and to have established the national liberty of Ireland on a wider basis than any upon which it ever stood.

In the mean time, and whilst general liberty was approaching towards its triumph, toleration to the Roman Catholics was making large and important strides. The declaration of the Dungannon delegates, so general and so impressive, being the opinion of the whole armed delegation of Ulster with but two inglorious exceptions, had a very great effect through Ireland. It was unfortunate for the subsequent career of the Volunteers that the principles which their armed representatives propounded at Dungannon, were not adopted by some of their leading minds. The seeds of ruin lay deep in the intolerant exception of the Catholics from the general rule of liberty. It was unwise, it was ungracious, it was impolitic. Flood and Charlemont would have raised a lofty temple to freedom, but would not permit the great preponderant majority of the nation to enter its gates, nay, even "to inscribe their names upon the entablature." But, though some of the distinguished officers of the Volunteers would have thus withheld the blessings of liberty from their fellow-countrymen, it is to be borne in mind—and principally because much argument has been

based upon the concessions granted since the Union by the united Legislature to the Catholics—that the principles of enlightened liberality made a wonderfully rapid progress in our native Parliament during the era of its glory.

Mr. Gardiner's Catholic Relief Bill was introduced on the 15th of February, the same day on which the Dungannon Convention met in the Church of Dungannon. Fitzgibbon, afterwards Lord Clare, endeavoured to defeat the measure by suggesting that it repealed the act of settlement, and disturbed Protestant titles. A good deal of alarm was created by his opinion, and time was taken to inquire into its soundness. On examination it was considered bad, and the House went into committee on the bill on the 20th of February, 1782. The measure proposed to concede to the Catholics, 1st, the enjoyment of property; 2ndly, the free exercise of their religion; 3rdly, the rights of education; 4thly, of marriage; and 5thly, of carrying arms. Flood supported the bill, but ungraciously laboured to establish a distinction between the rights of property and the rights of power. He said, "Though I would extend toleration to the Roman Catholics, yet I would not wish to make a change in the State, or enfeeble the Government." Mr. Gardiner, replying to the objection, that if this bill should pass, there would no longer be any *restraint* on Roman Catholics, said:—"But was it not a restraint upon a man that he could hold no trust nor office in the State? That he could not be a Member of Parliament, a justice, or a grand juror? That he could not serve in the army of his country, have a place in the revenue, be an advocate or attorney, or even become a freeman of the smallest corporation? If gentlemen laboured under these incapacities themselves, would they think them no restraint?" Fitzgibbon, who had endeavoured to defeat the measure at first, on the ground that it would disturb Protestant titles, now supported it, saying that "though it would be improper to allow Papists to become proprietors of boroughs, there was no good reason why they should not possess estates in counties, nor why Protestant tenants holding under them should not enjoy a right of voting for Members of Parliament." There was no question in this bill of allowing them to vote themselves, still less of allowing them to be Members of Parliament. The Attorney-General, Sir Hercules Langrishe. Sir Henry Cavendish, Mr. Ogle, the Provost, Mr. Walsh, Mr. Daly, Sir Boyle Roche, and Mr. Bagnal, spoke warmly for the bill. In the course of the several debates upon these measures of Mr. Gardiner, there were many objectors to each clause, and their objections rested on diverse grounds. Mr. Flood's vehement opposition to giving the Catho-

lies any rights which might gradually invest them with political power was sustained by Mr. Montgomery, Mr. Warburton, Mr. Rowley, Mr. John Burke and Mr. St. George. Many members, to their immortal honour, expressed themselves plainly and unreservedly as in favour of wiping off the whole Penal Code at once, not only in justice to the Catholics, but for the benefit of the whole country. Amongst these we find the names of Sir Lucius O'Brien, Mr. Forbes, Mr. Hussey Burgh, Mr. Yelverton, Mr. Dillon, Captain Hall, and Mr. Mossom. The clause permitting Catholics to go abroad for education was strenuously resisted by Fitzgibbon, Mason, Bushe, and others. It is needless to say that Mr. Grattan supported all the bills, and all their clauses. Indeed the debates are chiefly interesting because they were the occasion of the enunciation by him, for the first time, of the grand and generous thought of a true Irish nationality. He said: "I object to any delay which can be given to this clause; we have already considered the subject on a larger scale, and this is but a part of what the clause originally contained. We have before us the example of England, who four years ago granted Catholics a right of taking land in fee; the question is merely, whether we shall give this right or not, and if we give it, whether it shall be accompanied by all its natural advantages? Three years ago, when this question was debated in this House, there was a majority of three against granting Catholics estates in fee, and they were only allowed to take leases of 999 years. The argument then used against granting them the fee was, that they might influence elections. It has this day been shown, that they may have as effectual an influence by possessing leases of 999 years, as they can have by possessing the fee; at that time, I do declare I was somewhat prejudiced against granting Roman Catholics estates in fee, but their conduct since that period has fully convinced me of their true attachment to this country. When this country had resolved no longer to crouch beneath the burden of oppression that England had laid upon her; when she armed in defence of her rights, and a high spirited people demanded a free trade, did the Roman Catholics desert their countrymen? No: they were found amongst the foremost. When it was afterwards thought necessary to assert a free constitution, the Roman Catholics displayed their public virtue; they did not endeavour to take advantage of your situation; they did not endeavour to make terms for themselves, but they entered frankly and heartily into the cause of the country; judging by their own virtue, that they might depend upon your generosity for their reward. But now, after you have obtained a free trade, after the voice of the nation has



asserted her independence, they approach this House as humble suppliants, and beg to be admitted to the common rights of men. Upon the occasions I have mentioned, I did carefully observe their actions, and did then determine to support their cause whenever it came before this House, and to bear a strong testimony of the constitutional principles of the Catholic body. Nor should it be mentioned as a reproach to them that they fought under the banner of King James, when we recollect that before they entered the field, they extorted from him a Magna Charta, a British constitution. In 1779, when the fleets of Bourbon hovered on our coasts, and the Irish nation roused herself to arms, did the Roman Catholics stand aloof? Or did they, as might be expected from their oppressed situation, offer assistance to the enemy? No • they poured in subscriptions for the service of their country, or they pressed into the ranks of her glorious Volunteers.

“It has been shown that this clause grants the Roman Catholics no new power in the State; every argument, therefore, which goes against this clause goes against their having leases for 999 years, every argument which goes against their having leases for 999 years, goes against their having any leases at all; and every argument which goes against their having property, goes against their having existence in this land. The question is now, whether we shall grant Roman Catholics a power of enjoying estates, or whether we shall be a Protestant settlement or an Irish nation? Whether we shall throw open the gates of the temple of liberty to all our countrymen, or whether we shall confine them in bondage by penal laws? So long as the Penal Code remains, we never can be a great nation; the Penal Code is the shell in which the Protestant power has been hatched, and now it is become a bird, it must burst the shell asunder, or perish in it. I give my consent to the clause in its principle, extent, and boldness, and give my consent to it as the most likely means of obtaining a victory over the prejudices of Catholics, and over our own. I give my consent to it, because I would not keep two millions of my fellow subjects in a state of slavery; and because, as the mover of the Declaration of Rights, I should be ashamed of giving freedom to but six hundred thousand of my countrymen, when I could extend it to two millions more.”

The relief measures of Mr. Gardiner were contained in three separate bills, very cautiously and moderately prepared, in order to avoid too rude a shock to the Protestant Ascendency. To read these bills with their restrictions and exceptions, gives a vivid idea of what Protestant Ascendency in Ireland then was. The *first* enables Catholics to take and hold, in the same manner as

Protestants, any land and hereditaments *except* advowsons, manors, and boroughs returning members to Parliament. It removes several penalties from such of the clergy as should have taken the oath and been registered; it confines its operation to the regular clergy then within that kingdom (by which the succession of other regulars from abroad might be prevented), it deprives any clergyman officiating in a church or chapel, with a steeple or bell, of the benefit of the act, and repeals several of the most obnoxious parts of the acts of Anne and Geo. I. and Geo. II.

The second of the series of measures related to education—“An act to allow persons professing the Popish religion to teach school, and for regulating the education of Papists,” &c. It repeals certain parts of the acts of William and Anne, which inflicted on any Catholic teaching school, or privately instructing youth in learning, the same pains, penalties, and forfeitures as any Popish regular clergyman was subjected to (transportation, and in case of return, death), but *excepts*, out of its benefits, those who should not have taken the oath of allegiance, who should receive a Protestant scholar, or who should become ushers under Protestant schoolmasters. The act also enables Catholics (except ecclesiastics) to be guardians to their own or any other Popish child. These two first bills passed, and became law.

The third bill was for permitting intermarriages between Protestants and Papists: but the liberality of the House had not yet arrived at such a revolutionary point: they felt that they must draw the line somewhere; so they threw out this bill by a majority of eight.

Yet these wretched and pitiful measures which by their small relaxations only made more offensively conspicuous the great oppression of the Penal Code, were regarded in Ireland as a mighty effort of liberalism. Mr. Burke, who had a soul great enough to see the matter in its true light, thus speaks of these bills in his letter to a noble lord:—“To look at the bill in the abstract, it is neither more nor less than a renewed act of universal, unmitigated, indispensable, exceptionless disqualification. One would imagine that a bill inflicting such a multitude of incapacities, had followed on the heels of a conquest made by a very fierce enemy, under the impression of recent animosity and resentment. No man, on reading that bill, could imagine that he was reading an act of amnesty and indulgence. This I say on memory. It recites the oath, and that Catholics ought to be considered as good and loyal subjects to his Majesty, his Crown, and Government; then follows a universal exclusion of those good and loyal subjects from every, even the lowest, office of trust and profit, or from any

vote at an election ; from any privilege in a town corporate ; from being even a freeman of such corporations ; from serving on grand juries ; from a vote at a vestry ; from having a gun in his house, from being a barrister, attorney, solicitor, or, &c., &c.

“ This has surely more of the air of a table of proscriptions, than an act of grace. What must we suppose the laws concerning those good subjects to have been, of which this is a relaxation ? When a very great portion of the labour of individuals goes to the State, and is by the State again refunded to individuals through the medium of offices, and in this circuitous progress from the public to the private fund, indemnifies the families from whom it is taken, an equitable balance between the Government and the subject is established. But if a great body of the people who contribute to this State lottery, are excluded from all the prizes, the stopping the circulation with regard to them must be a most cruel hardship, amounting in effect to being double and treble taxed, and will be felt as such to the very quick by all the families high and low, of those hundreds of thousands, who are denied their chance in the returned fruits of their own industry. This is the thing meant by those who look on the public revenue only as a spoil ; and will naturally wish to have as few as possible concerned in the division of the booty. If a state should be so unhappy as to think it cannot subsist without such a barbarous proscription, the persons so proscribed ought to be indemnified by the remission of a large part of their taxes, by an immunity from the offices of public burden, and by an exemption from being pressed into any military or naval service. Why are Catholics excluded from the law ? Do not they expend money in their suits ? Why may not they indemnify themselves by profiting in the persons of some for the losses incurred by others ? Why may they not have persons of confidence, whom they may, if they please, employ in the agency of their affairs ? The exclusion from the law, from grand juries, from sheriffships, under-sheriffships, as well as from freedom in any corporation, may subject them to dreadful hardships, as it may exclude them wholly from all that is beneficial, and expose them to all that is mischievous in a trial by jury.”

It has seemed needful to go into details on the provisions of these bills of Mr. Gardiner, in order to show that at the very moment when Ireland was proclaiming her independence, and preparing to fight for it—relying too upon the aid of the Catholic people—there were few indeed who so much as dreamed of making those Catholics citizens or members of civil society. This radical vice is quite enough to account for the short life of Ireland as an independent nation. In truth, nobody in Europe had any



idea of religious equality, none doubted the right of the orthodox to possess themselves of the lands and goods of the heterodox, until a few years after this period, when France gave the noble example of absolute equality before the law for all religions.

In the course of this same eventful February, Grattan brought on a new motion for an address to the King, declaring the rights of Ireland. But within that corrupted atmosphere, upon those bribed benches, was the very worst place for liberty to breathe.

The time had not yet arrived, though it was near at hand, for the Irish Parliament to assent to the proposition of its own freedom. They started back reluctant from the glowing form of Liberty; not even with a nation in arms behind them, and with a man of the inspired eloquence of Grattan amongst their sordid ranks, could *their* valour and *his* genius triumph over the inveterate corruption and servility of that House. Grattan's motion was lost by a majority of 137 to 68. But the fate of that Statesman who had long sat at the fountain head of corruption, and who ministered so liberally to the profligacy of the Irish majority—the worst minister that England ever had, whose obstinate perseverance in principles opposed to the theory of the British constitution, lost to England the noblest member of her great confederation—was at length sealed. He was obliged to relinquish with disgrace, the post he had held with dishonour. Defeat and disaster followed Lord North into his retirement. He was succeeded by Lord Rockingham and Charles Fox; Lord Carlisle was recalled, and the Duke of Portland was chosen to administer the complicated affairs of Ireland. Grattan, on the 14th of March, declared that he would bring on the Declaration of Rights, and he moved, and succeeded in carrying a very unusual summons, that the House be called over on Tuesday, the 16th of April next, and that the Speaker do write circular letters to the members, ordering them to attend that day, *as they tender the rights of the Irish Parliament.*

The Duke of Portland made a triumphant entry into Dublin, and he was welcomed, for no good reason that the history of the times can give, with the loudest acclamations. His arrival appeared to promise the fulfilment of all the hopes of Ireland, and he received, by anticipation, a gratitude which he never deserved. But his coming had been preceded by some of the habitual policy of his party. Letters of honeyed courtesy, as hollow as they were sweet, were despatched by Fox to "his old and esteemed friend, the good Earl of Charlemont."\* Whig

\* Hardy's Life of Charlemont, vol. ii., p. 4.

diplomacy and cunning never concocted a more singular piece of writing. He alludes with graceful familiarity to the long and pleasing friendship which had existed between them, and after a variety of compliments, begs for a postponement of the House for three weeks, in order that the Duke of Portland might have an opportunity of inquiring into the opinions of Lord Charlemont, and of gentlemen of the first weight and consequence. But Fox was well aware of their opinions. They were recorded in the votes and speeches of the two Houses, and in the military transactions of the Volunteers. No man knew them better than Fox. He had been in communication with the leaders of the "Patriot" party, and was well aware of the merits of their claims. And his proposition was a feeble device to try the chapter of accidents. But Charlemont was firm, for Grattan would give "no time." The general of the Volunteers replied in terms of courteous dignity, but unwonted determination. He told the wily minister of England that the Declaration of Rights was universally looked up to as an essential and necessary preliminary to any confidence in the new administration. "We ask for our rights—our incontrovertible rights—restore them to us, and for ever unite in the closest and best riveted bonds of affection, the kingdom of Ireland to her beloved, though hitherto unkind sister." This was the sentimental cant of politics; but the upshot was, that the Declaration of Rights was to be moved on the 16th of April, and it was only left to the genius of intrigue to yield with assumed grace what England dared no longer withhold. No civil letters to courtly vanity—no philosophic generalities and specious promises could effect anything with Volunteer artillery. The epistles had all the graces of Horace Walpole, and were abundant in compliments; the compliments were returned, but the Declaration was retained. Grattan, if his own wisdom could have allowed it, would not have dared to pause. He stood in the first rank—a hundred thousand men were behind him in arms—he could not hesitate. It was his glory, and his wisdom to advance. And he advanced in good earnest, nor staid his foot till it was planted on the ruins of usurpation.

On the 9th of April, Fox communicated to the House of Commons in England, the following message from the King:—

"George R. : His Majesty, being concerned to find that discontent and jealousies are prevailing among his loyal subjects in Ireland, upon matters of great weight and importance, earnestly recommends to this House, to take the same into their most serious consideration, in order to such a final adjustment as may give mutual satisfaction to both kingdoms. G. R."

A similar communication was made to the Irish Parliament by John Hely Hutchinson, principal secretary of State in Ireland, who, at the same time, stated that he had uniformly maintained the right of Ireland to independent and exclusive legislation, and declared that he would give his earnest support to any assertion of that right, whether by vote of the House, by address, or by enactment.

A scene of still greater excitement and interest occurred on this occasion, than that which had so carried away the citizens of Dublin two years before, when Grattan first introduced the question of Irish rights. The nation had become strong and confident by success—they had achieved free trade—their military organization had attained the greatest perfection of discipline and skill—their progress was, indeed, triumphant, they had but one short step to take. There was, therefore, great excitement through Ireland as to the issue of Grattan's Declaration of Right, not that they apprehended failure, but that all men felt anxious to see the realization of their splendid hopes. The streets of Dublin were lined with the Volunteers—the House of Commons was a great centre, around which all the city appeared moving. Inside, rank and fashion and genius were assembled; outside, arms were glistening, and drums sounding. It was the commencement of a new Government, and the King had sent a message of peace to Ireland.

The message was similar to that delivered to the English House, and when it had been read, Mr. George Ponsonby moved that an address should be presented, which might mean any thing, and meant nothing. It was to tell his Majesty that the House was thankful for a gracious message, and that it would take into its serious consideration the discontents and jealousies which had arisen in Ireland, the causes of which should be investigated with all convenient despatch, and be submitted to the royal justice and wisdom of his Majesty.

When this motion, very full of the solemn plausibilities of loyalty and the generalities of pretended patriotism, was made, Henry Grattan rose to move his amendment. It was a moment of great interest. The success of the motion was certain, but all parties were anxious to learn the extent of the demands which Grattan was about to make. As the "herald and oracle of his armed countrymen" he moved the amendment which contained the rights of Ireland; and confident of its success, he apostrophized his country as already free, and appealed to the memory of those great men who had first taught the doctrine of liberty which his nobler genius had realized. He moved:—



“That a humble address be presented to his Majesty, to return his Majesty the thanks of this House for his most gracious message to this House, signified by his grace the Lord Lieutenant.

“To assure his Majesty of our unshaken attachment to his Majesty's person and Government, and of our lively sense of his paternal care in thus taking the lead to administer content to his Majesty's subjects of Ireland.

“That, thus encouraged by his royal interposition, we shall beg leave, with all duty and affection, to lay before his Majesty the causes of our discontents and jealousies. To assure his Majesty that his subjects of Ireland are a free people. That the Crown of Ireland is an imperial crown inseparably annexed to the Crown of Great Britain, on which connection the interests and happiness of both nations essentially depend: but that the kingdom of Ireland is a distinct kingdom, with a Parliament of her own—the sole Legislature thereof. That there is no body of men competent to make laws to bind this nation except the King, Lords, and Commons, of Ireland; nor any other Parliament which hath any authority or power of any sort whatsoever in this country, save only the Parliament of Ireland. To assure his Majesty, that we humbly conceive that in this right, the very essence of our liberties exists: a right which we, on the part of all the people of Ireland, do claim as their birthright, and which we cannot yield but with our lives.

“To assure his Majesty, that we have seen, with concern, certain claims advanced by the Parliament of Great Britain, in an act entitled ‘An act for the better securing the dependency of Ireland:’ an act containing matter entirely irreconcilable to the fundamental rights of this nation. That we conceive this act, and the claims it advances, to be the great and principal cause of the discontents and jealousies in this kingdom.

“To assure his Majesty, that his Majesty's Commons of Ireland, do most sincerely wish that all bills which become law in Ireland should receive the approbation of his Majesty under the seal of Great Britain; but that yet we do consider the practice of suppressing our bills in the council of Ireland, or altering the same anywhere, to be another just cause of discontent and jealousy.

“To assure his Majesty, that an act, entitled ‘An act for the better accommodation of his Majesty's forces,’ being unlimited in duration, and defective in other instances, but passed in that shape from the particular circumstances of the times, is another just cause of discontent and jealousy in this kingdom.

“That we have submitted these, the principal causes of the

present discontent and jealousy of Ireland, and remain in humble expectation of redress."

The address was carried unanimously in both Houses; and Parliament took a short recess, to allow time for the matter to be dealt with in England. Nobody, either in Ireland or in England, doubted the issue. It was quite certain that the declaration of the Irish Parliament was all-sufficient to establish the liberty of the country.

One may now be allowed to regret that Lord North's administration was no longer in power. In that case England would have refused concession; would have attempted to enforce her pretensions in Ireland: war would have been the inevitable result; Ireland would have necessarily made an alliance with France, whose great Revolution was now rapidly approaching; so there would have been happily an end to the British empire. Unfortunately the Statesmen of that country were as wise as they were treacherous. On the 17th of May, simultaneously in the two Houses at Westminster, Lord Shelburne in the Lords and Mr. Fox in the Commons, having read the addresses of the Irish Parliament, moved—"That it was the opinion of that House that the act of the 6th Geo. I., entitled '*An Act for the better securing the dependency of Ireland upon the Crown of Great Britain*,' ought to be repealed."

On the 27th of May, the Duke of Portland officially communicated to the Irish Parliament this great and memorable concession, which he said came from "the magnanimity of the King and the wisdom of the Parliament;" closing his message with these words:—"On my own part I entertain not the least doubt but that the same spirit which urged you to share the freedom of Great Britain, will confirm you in your determination to share her fate also, standing or falling with the British nation." This is the kind of cant which has ruined Ireland: yet the plain and eternal truth—that while the British nation *stands* Ireland must fall, and *vice versa*, was even then well understood by Irish patriots, and often avowed by Grattan himself. "Ireland," said he, "Ireland is in strength; she has acquired that strength by the weakness of Britain, for Ireland was saved when America was lost: when England conquered, Ireland was coerced: when she was defeated, Ireland was relieved; and when Charleston was taken, the mutiny and sugar bills were altered. Have you not all of you, when you heard of a defeat, at the same instant condoled with England, and congratulated Ireland?"

"Poynings's Law" was still on the Statute-book; and the work of enfranchisement was not complete until it was repealed: as it

was an Irish Statute, it was the Irish Parliament which had to repeal it; and this was immediately done on motion of Mr. Yelverton. Grattan introduced a bill "to punish mutiny and desertion," which repealed the perpetual mutiny act and restored to Parliament a due control over the army; also another bill to reverse erroneous judgments and decrees, a measure which was supposed at the time to have settled the question of the final judicature of Ireland, and to have taken from the English Lords and King's Bench their usurped appellate jurisdiction.

At the same time that the Legislature was thus taking securities and guarantees (as it thought) for permanent independence, it was not forgetful of the honourable debt due to the man who, above all others, had conduced to restore the dignity and independence of Ireland. £50,000 were voted to Henry Grattan, his friends having declined for him the larger tribute of £100,000 as at first proposed, and having also refused an insidious offer of the Phoenix Park and Viceregal Lodge, which had been made by Mr. Conolly on the part of the Government.

Ireland was now, at least formally and technically, an independent nation.

## CHAPTER XXI.

1783—1784.

It would be extremely pleasing to have now to record, that this nation, thus emancipated by a generous impulse of patriotism, and launched forth on a higher and wider career of existence, gave a noble example of public virtue, tolerance, purity, and liberality. Such is not the record we are to give. England had not (of course) yielded the independence of her "sister island" in good faith. Finding herself, for the moment, unable to crush the rising spirit of her Irish colony by force, she feigned to give way for a time, well determined to have her revenge, either by fraud or force, or by any possible combination of those two agencies. From the very moment of the acknowledgment of Ireland's freedom, British ministers began to plot the perpetration of "*the Union*."

The very nobility of nature and unsuspecting generosity of the leading Irish patriot of the day, so prompt and eager to gush out in unmerited gratitude, so cordially impatient to put away every shadow of ill-will between the two "sister-countries," gave the English administration a great advantage in devising their plans for our utter ruin.



"It is difficult," says Mr. MacNevin, "to have much sympathy for the extravagant amount of gratitude awarded to the British Parliament by the leading men of the day in Ireland. They treated the rights of Ireland as though their establishment was not the work of Irishmen but the free gift of English magnanimity. And the address moved by Grattan, 'did protest too much.'" Nothing can be imagined more artlessly innocent than this address moved by Mr. Grattan in reply to the Viceroy's official announcement to Parliament of the repeal of the Declaratory Act. It assures his Majesty "that no constitutional question between the two countries will any longer exist which can interrupt their harmony, and that Great Britain as she has approved our firmness, so she may rely on our affection." It further assures his Majesty "that we learn with singular satisfaction the account of his successes in the East and West Indies," &c. : which was doubtlessly extremely polite, but essentially false and foolish, because the mover of the address, and every one who voted for it, knew well that successes of England anywhere in the world were disasters to Ireland.

Lord Clare, who understood the true relations between the two countries better than any other Irish Statesman, in order to prove that the transactions of 1782, between Great Britain and Ireland were not considered as final, tells us, that on the 6th of June the Duke of Portland thus wrote to Lord Shelburne :—"I have the best reason to hope that I shall soon be enabled to transmit to you the sketch or outlines of an act of Parliament to be adopted by the Legislatures of the respective kingdoms, by which the superintending power and supremacy of Great Britain, in all matters of state and general commerce, will be virtually and effectually acknowledged ; that a share of the expense in carrying on a defensive or offensive war, either in support of our own dominions, or those of our allies, shall be borne by Ireland in proportion to the actual state of her abilities, and that she will adopt every such regulation as may be judged necessary by Great Britain for the better ordering and securing her trade and commerce with foreign nations, or her own colonies and dependencies, consideration being duly had to the circumstances of Ireland. I am flattered with the most positive assurances from ——— and ——— of their support in carrying such a bill through both Houses of Parliament, and I think it most advisable to bring it to perfection at the present moment." And he happened to know from an official quarter, that the sketch of such an act of Parliament was then drawn. He knew the gentleman who framed it, and he knew from the same quarter, that blank and blank, and blank

and blank, did unequivocally signify their approbation of it. This communication was received with the satisfaction which it demanded by the British Cabinet. On the 9th of June Lord Shelburne wrote to the Duke of Portland in answer to his last despatch :—" The contents of your Grace's letter of the 6th inst. are too important to hesitate about detaining the messenger, whilst I assure your Grace of the satisfaction which I know your letter will give the King. I have lived in the most anxious expectation of some such measure offering itself : nothing prevented my pressing it in this despatch, except having repeatedly stated the just expectations of this country, I was apprehensive of giving that the air of demand, which would be better left to a voluntary spirit of justice and foresight. No matter who has the merit, let the two kingdoms be one, which can only be by Ireland now acknowledging the *superintending power and supremacy to be where nature has placed it*, in precise and unambiguous terms. I am sure I need not inculcate to your Grace the importance of words in an act, which must decide on the happiness of ages, particularly in what regards contribution and trade, subjects most likely to come into frequent question."

It was easy for British Statesmen to find in Ireland the suitable material for their usual system of corruption ; because the Parliament did not at all represent the nation. Not only were four fifths of the people expressly excluded, as Catholics, from all share in the representation ; but of the 300 Members of the House of Commons, only 72 were really returned by the people : 123 sat for " nomination boroughs," and represented only their patrons. Fifty-three peers directly appointed these legislators, and could also insure by their influence the election of about ten others. Fifty commoners also nominated ninety-one members, and controlled the election of four others. With such a condition of the popular representation, the British ministry knew that they could soon render it manageable ; and they only waited till their own foreign troubles should be over to re-establish the supremacy " where nature has placed it."

The first evil omen for Ireland was the rivalry, or rather downright enmity of Flood and Grattan. The former had resigned his place, in order to act freely with the " Patriots," and had laboured by the side of Grattan in forming and inspiring the Volunteer force, and the potent public spirit which at length wrested from England's reluctant hands the formal recognition of Ireland's independence. If he ranks lower than Grattan on the roll of the " Patriot" party, it is because he remained to the last an enemy of Catholic emancipation, and persisted in favouring

that vicious and petty policy of confining the *nation*, with all its powers and rights, to one-fifth part of the inhabitants.

In the first essential difference between these two men, Flood was clearly in the right. It was his opinion that a simple repeal of the Declaratory Act of George the First, by England, was not a sufficient security against the resumption of Legislative control. His argument was intelligible enough :—The 6th of George the First was only a declaratory act ; a declaratory act does not make or unmake but only declare the law ; and neither could its repeal make or unmake the law. The repeal, unless there was an express renunciation of the principle—is only a repeal of the declaration, and not of the legal principle. The principle remained as before, unless it was specially renounced. Many acts had been passed by the British Parliament binding Ireland, and some of them before the declaratory act of George. The act did not legalize these Statutes ; it only declared that the principle of their enactment was legal—its repeal does not establish their illegality, but only repeals the declaration. Flood was historically right. In the reign of William and Mary, the English Parliament usurped the absolute right of making laws for Ireland, and in 1691 passed an act to make a fundamental alteration in the constitution of this country by excluding Roman Catholics, who were the majority of the nation, from a seat in the Lords and Commons. It was true, he argued, that the Irish had renounced the claim of England, but could such renunciation be equal to a renunciation by England ? In any controversy could the assertion of a party in his own favour be equal to the admission of his antagonist ? Fitzgibbon was of the same opinion as Flood, and both insisted on an express renunciation by England.

Grattan, on the other hand, refused the security of a British Statute, and exclaimed that the people had not come to England for a charter but with a charter, and asked her to cancel all declarations in opposition to it. It must be said that Ireland had no charter. Her Declaration of Right was not a Bill of Rights, and Flood asked for a Bill of Rights. He was not satisfied without an express renunciation. But what guarantee against future usurpation by a future Parliament, was any renunciation, however strong ? The true security for liberty was the spirit of the people and the arms of the Volunteers. When that spirit passed away, renunciations and Statutes were no more than parchment—the faith of England remained the same as ever, unchangeable.

Whatever were the merits of the controversy, it was pregnant with the worst effects. The Parliament adopted the views of Grattan ; the Volunteers sided with Flood. A Bill of Rights, a



great international compact, a plain specific deed, the statement of the claims of Ireland and the pledge of the faith of England would have been satisfactory, and it must be confessed that men were not far astray in asking for it. But unfortunately, the great minds of the day so far participated in the weaknesses of humanity as to yield to small impulses and to plunge into a rivalry fatal to their country, in place of uniting their powers for the completion of a noble and glorious undertaking. It was unfortunate for their glory—it was fatal for liberty.\* Flood, though legally right in the argument and wise in his suggestions, may unwittingly have permitted himself to be influenced by a feeling of jealousy. He had seen the laurels he had been so long earning, placed on the brow of a younger and certainly a greater man, and his dissatisfaction was an unfortunate but a natural feeling. On the other hand, Grattan, whose peculiar work was the Declaration of Rights, felt indignant at the imputation cast on his wisdom, and the impeachment of his policy by the measures which Flood proposed. When Flood was refused leave to bring in his Bill of Rights on the 19th of June, Grattan, who had opposed it in one of his finest speeches, moved a resolution, which appears very indefensible, “that the Legislature of Ireland is independent; and that any person who shall by writing or otherwise, maintain that a right in any other country to make laws for Ireland internally or externally exists or can be revived, is inimical to the peace of both kingdoms.” It was a strong measure to denounce as a *public enemy* the wary Statesman who read futurity with more caution than himself. He withdrew his motion and substituted another: “that leave was refused to bring in said heads of a bill, because the sole and exclusive right of legislation, in the Irish Parliament, in all cases, whether internally or externally, hath been already asserted by Ireland; and fully, finally, and irrevocably acknowledged by the British Parliament.”

The opinion of the Lawyers’ crops of Volunteers was in favour

\* “It was deeply lamented that at a moment critical and vital to Ireland beyond all former precedent, an inveterate and almost vulgar hostility should have prevented the co-operation of men, whose counsels and talents would have secured its independence. But that jealous lust for undivided honour, the eternal enemy of patriots and liberty, led them away even beyond the ordinary limits of Parliamentary decorum. The old courtiers fanned the flame—the new ones added fuel to it—and the independence of Ireland was eventually lost by the distracting result of their animosities, which in a few years was used as an instrument to annihilate that very Legislature, the preservation of which had been the theme of their hostilities.”—*Barrington’s Rise and Fall*, chap. xvii.

of Flood's interpretation of the constitutional relations of the two countries. They considered that repealing a declaration was not destroying a principle, and that a Statute renouncing any pre-existing right, was an indispensable guarantee for future security. They appointed a committee to inquire into the question, which reported that it was necessary that an express renunciation should accompany the repeal of the 6th of George the First. Whereupon the corps of Independent Dublin Volunteers, of which Grattan was colonel, presented him with an address. They reviewed the whole argument, and ended by requesting their colonel to assist with his hearty concurrence and strenuous support, the opinions propounded by a committee "chosen from the best-informed body in this nation." Such an address, including at one and the same time, an approbation of the course pursued by Flood, and a request to Grattan to support the doctrines he had from the first opposed, was construed by his nice sense of honour into a dismissal from his command. He did not resign lest his regiment might construe a peremptory resignation as an offence. But he told them, that in the succession of officers, they would have an opportunity "to indulge the range of their disposition." He was, however, re-elected, nor did he lose the command until the October of the next year, when he voted against retrenchment in the army. The Belfast First Volunteer company also addressed him. Doubts, they said, had arisen whether the repeal of the 6th of George the First was a sufficient renunciation of the power formally exercised over Ireland. They thought it advisable that a law should be enacted similar to the addresses which had been moved to his Majesty, and which embodied the declaration of the Rights of Ireland. Grattan's answer was laconic, but explicit. He said he had given the fullest consideration to their suggestions; he was sorry he differed from them; he conceived their doubts to be ill-founded. With great respect to their opinions, and unalterable attachment to their interest, he adhered to the latter. They received a different answer from Flood, whom they admitted as a member of their corps. Similar circumstances occurring in different other regiments, conduced to foster the evil passions of those two distinguished men, until they broke out into a disgraceful and virulent personal dispute. But there were worse consequences attending this unfortunate quarrel. Men whose united talents and zeal would have rendered secure the edifice of their joint labours, and the monument of their glory, were prompted to the adoption of different lines of policy. Grattan refused to advance. Flood was all for progress. Had both united to reform the

constitution, and to secure its permanence, that event, which eventually put a period to the existence of the Legislature of Ireland, would never have occurred. A decision in the Court of King's Bench of England, by Lord Mansfield, in an Irish case brought there by appeal, seemed to affirm the arguments, and to give weight to the objections of Flood. Mr. Townshend, in introducing in the English Commons the Renunciation Bill (January, 1783), said, that doubts were entertained as to the sufficiency of the simple repeal, and had been increased by a late decision in the Court of King's Bench, which, however, he was informed, the court was bound to give, the case having come under its cognizance before any question as to the appellate jurisdiction in Irish matters had been raised. He then moved "that leave be given to bring in a bill for removing and preventing all doubts which have arisen, or may arise, concerning the exclusive rights of the Parliament and courts of Ireland, in matters of legislation and judicature, and for preventing any writ of error, or appeal from any of his Majesty's courts in Ireland from being received, heard, or adjusted in any of his Majesty's courts in this kingdom; and that Mr. Townshend, General Conway, Mr. Pitt, Mr. William Grenville, and the Attorney and Solicitor-General do bring in the bill." The motion passed without a division, and the Renunciation Bill was the result. This vindicated the correctness of Flood's reasoning—it did not afford any additional security to liberty. A solemn international compact, and internal reform of Parliament were still required to render secure and indefeasible the settlement of '82. It is a matter of serious and grave regret, that Grattan did not take the same leading part in obtaining Parliamentary reform, and relieving the Legislature from internal influence, as in emancipating it from foreign control. He would have been a safe counsellor to the Volunteers; and, had it been found advisable and consistent with the spirit of the constitution to appeal to another assembly of armed delegates, it would have met under better auspices than the Dublin Convention of 1783—nor would it have terminated so ignominiously. But he was influenced by weaker counsels; and, admitting that no evil passion of any kind was busy with him, we are forced to believe that he allowed his manly judgment to be swayed by inferior and timid minds. Reform was plainly necessary to the completion of his own labours. The House of Commons did not represent the people, nor did its construction give any guarantee for the security of popular liberties. Such a body might be forced into great and extraordinary virtue, as it was in '82; under such unusual influences, with the Volunteers



in arms, throughout the whole country, and men like Grattan, Burgh, and Flood amongst them, they were unable to resist the tide that was flowing; but there was no principle of stability in them, they were irresponsible and corrupt. Reform was the obvious corollary of the Declaration of Right. Had the framers of the constitution of '82 united to consolidate and secure their own work, and ceased from the insane contentions by which they disgraced their success; had they given a popular character to the Legislature which they freed from external control, and converted it into the veritable organ of the national will, by conferring extensive franchises on the people, by including the Catholics in their scheme, and putting an end to the system of close boroughs, it would have been impossible for any English minister, without a war, whose issue would have been doubtful, to destroy the Legislative existence of the country by a union.

And this they could have done. The Volunteers were still in force. One hundred thousand men were in arms, and had urgently pressed upon their leaders the insufficiency of their work: they had demanded reform in every provincial meeting\*—at Belfast, on the 9th of June, 1783, a meeting of delegates from thirty-eight corps of Volunteers assembled after a review, and adopted the following resolution:—

*“Resolved, unanimously, That at an era so honourable to the spirit, wisdom, and loyalty of Ireland, A MORE EQUAL REPRESENTATION of the people in Parliament deserves the deliberate attention of every Irishman; as that alone which can perpetuate to future ages the inestimable possession of a free constitution. In this sentiment, we are happy to coincide with a late decision of the much respected Volunteer army of the Province of Munster; as well as with the opinion of that consummate Statesman, the late Earl of Chatham; by whom it was held a favourite measure for checking venality, promoting public virtue, and restoring the native spirit of the constitution.”*

\* Towards the end of 1782, the Government set on foot a plan whose design was obvious enough—the embodying of Fencible regiments. The Volunteers took fire, and held meetings to oppose it in every quarter. Galway took the initiative, and was followed by Dublin and Belfast. The resolutions passed at the Tholsel in Galway on the 1st of September, 1782, to the effect that the Volunteers were most interested in the defence of the country, and most adequate to the duty—that raising Fencible regiments without sanction of Parliament, was unconstitutional, nor justified by necessity, and might be dangerous to liberty—were adopted at several meetings. The Belfast company met, protested against the measure, and addressed Flood. The plan was not then carried into execution. It was a manifest attempt to terrify and overawe the Volunteers. They were too strong as yet to submit.

Similar meetings were had, and similar resolutions adopted in every part of Ireland. If the spirit of the Volunteers had been wisely directed, and their exertions turned into the proper channel, there seems to be no reason to doubt that the constitution and liberties of Ireland would have been firmly secured on a basis that would have withstood the efforts of England. In the latter country, the question of Reform had met with the sanction of the Duke of Richmond and Mr. Pitt. Reform Associations had been formed, two of which, the "Yorkshire Association," and the "London Constitutional Knowledge Society," entered into correspondence with the Volunteers, applauded their spirit, and urged upon them the utility of holding a National Convention of the delegates of the four provinces.

It was a suggestion quite consonant to their spirit and to their views, and they lost no time in acting upon it. In the month of July, 1783, delegates from several corps in Ulster summoned a general assembly of delegates from the entire province for the 8th of September. Five hundred representatives met in pursuance of this requisition at Dungannon.\* Flood travelled from Dublin to attend, but was detained on the road by illness. The Earl of Bristol was present, and took an active part in the proceedings. He was the son of Lord Hervey, and made a considerable figure for a few years in the proceedings of the Volunteers. There is no man of whom more opposite opinions are given. While some represent him as a man of elegant erudition and extensive learning, others paint him as possessing parts more brilliant than solid, as being generous, but uncertain; splendid, but fantastic; an amateur without judgment; and a critic without taste; engaging, but licentious in conversation; polite, but violent; in fact, possessing many of the qualities which the satirist attributes to another nobleman of his country, the fickle and profligate Villiers. There could be no greater contrasts in his character than in his conduct and position. He wore an English coronet and an Irish mitre; and some have thought that he was visionary enough to have assumed the port of the tribune only to obtain the power of a sovereign. He was indeed monarchical in his splendour—his retinue exceeded that of the most affluent nobleman—his equipages were magnificent—he delighted in the acclamations of the populace—and the military escort which surrounded his car-

\* Mr. Grattan says this meeting took place at a Meeting-house of Dissenters in Belfast. The statement in the text is on the authority of the Historical Collections relating to Belfast, p. 255, and Belfast Politics, p. 245. See also a pamphlet, *History of the Convention*, published in 1784.

riage.\* He was a man who possessed princely qualities; he was costly, luxurious, munificent, and, in the strange antithesis of his position—bishop, earl, demagogue—was formed to attract the nation amongst which he had cast his lot. But his qualities were not dangerous; Government was more afraid of him than they needed to be; and he effected little in the history of his day, more than playing a splendid part in a transitory pageant.

The second Dungannon Convention elected for its president Mr. James Stewart, afterwards Marquis of Londonderry. He was the friend of Lord Charlemont. They passed a number of resolutions, but the most important was the following:—

“That a committee of five persons be appointed to represent Ulster in a grand national Convention, to be held at noon, in the Royal Exchange of Dublin, on the 10th of November, then ensuing; to which, they hoped that each of the other provinces would send delegates to digest and publish a plan of Parliamentary reform, to pursue such measures as may appear most likely to render it effectual; to adjourn from time to time, and to convene provincial meetings if found necessary.”

Addresses were issued to the Volunteers of the three provinces, filled with the noblest sentiments in favour of liberty, and abundant in the impassioned if not inflated eloquence in which the spirit of the day delighted to be clothed. There was, however, an anomaly in their proceedings, and a striking and painful contrast between their abstract theories of liberty and their practical manifestation. A proposition in favour of the Catholics was rejected. Here was a body of men, not endowed with the powers of Legislation, but acting as a suggestive assembly, dictating to Legislation the way in which it should go, and declaring that freedom should be made more diffusive in its enjoyment; yet they are found, on grave deliberation, rejecting from their scheme the vast body of the nation, whom they professed to emancipate and raise. The practical absurdity was the rock on which they split. And it is said regretfully and without reproach, that the influence of this intolerant principle upon their counsels is attributable to Lord Charlemont and Henry Flood. These good men were the victims of a narrow religious antipathy, which prevented either of them from rendering permanent service to the cause of liberty.

The interval between the Dungannon meeting and the Dublin Convention was stormy; yet the first Parliament in the Vice-

\* He was escorted to the Rotunda Convention by a troop of Light Dragoons, commanded by his nephew, George R. Fitzgerald.—*Barrington's Rise and Fall of the Irish Nation*, c. 7.



royalty of Lord Northington opened with a vote of thanks to the Volunteers. This vote was the work of Government. It is most probable that it was a deprecatory measure, and intended to guard against any violence in the Convention. This was the only measure of conciliation during the Session. Sir Edward Newenham introduced the question of retrenchment in the public expenses, principally with reference to reduction in the army. It was taken up warmly by Sir H. Cavendish and Henry Flood ; and it certainly did appear as if this enmity to the regular army was a Volunteer sentiment, so strongly did the principal Parliamentary friends of that distinguished body persevere in the pressing upon the Legislature the question of retrenchment. Grattan was opposed to any reduction in the regular forces—he said that it was a matter of compact that they remain at a certain standard settled in 1782, and he is accordingly found an opponent on all occasions of every proposition of retrenchment. The question was unfortunate ; it led to that degrading personal discussion which displayed the two greatest men in the country in the discreditable attitude of virulent and vulgar personal animosity. On Sir H. Cavendish's motion for reduction in the expenses of the kingdom, Flood eagerly and eloquently supported the proposition. But, wandering beyond the necessities of his argument, he indulged in some wanton reflections upon Grattan, and the result was an invective from the latter, so fierce, implacable, and merciless, that it leaves behind it at a great distance the finest specimens of recorded virulence. The estrangement of these illustrious men was complete. And the triumph of their passions was one, and not a very remote, cause of the downfall of their country. They could no longer unite to serve her ; their views which had differed so widely before, thenceforward became principles of antagonism, to carry out which was a point of honour and an instinct of anger ; and they whose combined wisdom would have rendered liberty secure, became unwittingly her most destructive enemies. The Conservative policy of Grattan, and the progressive principles of Flood, in the acrimony of contest and the estrangement of parties, gave full opportunity to Government to perfect that scheme which ended in the Union.

We have now arrived at what may well be called the last scene of the great political and military drama in which the Volunteers played such a distinguished part. At a time of great and pressing public peril, they sprung to arms and saved their country. Having dispelled the fears of foreign invasion and secured the integrity of Ireland, they found within her own system a greater enemy. They found trade restricted and Legislation powerless. They

emancipated industry and commerce; and they restored a constitution. But with their achievements, their ambition increased, and concluding with reason that a constitution must be a nominal blessing, where the Parliament was not freely chosen by the people,\* they resolved upon employing their powerful organization to procure a reform in Parliament. How far this was consistent with their original principle—how far they should have left to the Parliament itself the remodelling of its internal structure, and appealed to its wisdom in their civilian character, it is difficult to say. They had asserted at Dungannon—and the proposition had received the sanction of the Legislature—that a citizen, by learning the use of arms, did not forfeit the right of discussing political affairs. Yet Grattan, in replying to Lord Clare's speech on the Union, seems to have insisted that armed men might make declarations in favour of liberty, but having recovered it, they should retire to cultivate the blessings of peace.† The Volunteers, however, did not imagine that liberty was secured until the Parliament was free. Nor is it easy to understand why, if their declarations were of value in 1782 to recover a constitution, they should not be of equal importance in 1783 to reform the Legislature.

Previous to the first meeting of the Dublin Convention, provincial assemblies were held in Leinster, Munster, and Connaught. They passed resolutions similar to those adopted at Dungannon—delegates were appointed—and the whole nation was prepared for the great Congress on which the fate of Ireland seemed to depend.

At length, amidst the hush of public expectation, the excited hopes of the nation, and the fears of Government, on Monday, the 10th of November, one hundred and sixty delegates of the Volunteers of Ireland met at the Royal Exchange. They elected Lord Charlemont, chairman, and John Talbot Ashenhurst and Captain Dawson, secretaries, and then adjourned to the Rotunda. Their progress was one of triumph. The city and county Volunteers lined the streets, and received the delegates, who marched two and two through their ranks, with drums beating and colours flying. Thousands of spectators watched with eyes of hopeful admiration the slow and solemn march of the armed represen-

\* There were three hundred members; sixty-four were county members, and about the same number might be returned with great exertion by the people in the cities and towns. The remainder were the close borough members, the nominees of the aristocracy, and invariably the supporters of Government.

† Grattan's *Miscellaneous Works*, p. 93.

tatives to their place of assembly ; and the air was rent with the acclamations of the people. Vain noises—hapless enthusiasm ! In a few weeks, the doors that opened to admit the delegates of one hundred thousand men, were closed upon them with inconsiderate haste ; and the fate of the constitution they had restored was sealed amidst sullen gloom and angry discontent. But popular enthusiasm was not prophetic, or could only anticipate from a glorious pageantry a great result.

The largest room of the Rotunda was arranged for the reception of the delegates. Semicircular seats, in the manner of an amphitheatre, were ranged around the chair. The appearance of the house was brilliant : the orchestra was filled with ladies ; and the excitement of the moment was intense and general. Their first proceeding was to affirm the fundamental principle of Dungannon, that the right of political discussion was not lost by the assumption of arms ; but the resolution was worded in that spirit of exclusion which was the bane and destruction of the Volunteers.

It was “ *Resolved*, That the Protestant inhabitants of this country are required by the Statute Law to carry arms, and to learn the use of them,” &c.

It seems difficult at this day to account for the narrow and perverse policy which prevailed in this Convention with regard to the Catholics. The delegates forming that body had it in their power to lay the foundations of the newly liberated nation deep in the hearts and interests of the whole people, and thus defy both the arts and arms of England to enslave a united Ireland. They perversely threw away this noble opportunity : their work of regenerating their country was but half done ; English intrigue was soon busy on the large field thus left for its operation ; and it cannot be thought wonderful if very many of the Catholics afterwards became reconciled to the fatal idea of a Legislative Union with England, as affording a better chance for their emancipation than living under the bitter and intolerant exclusiveness of the Irish Ascendency.

A very shameful incident occurred on one of the early days of this Convention meeting. It was known that there were some members of it who strongly urged some measure of relief to the Catholics, especially the restoration of their elective franchise ; when Sir Boyle Roche, a Member of Parliament, chiefly known by his good bulls and bad jokes, appeared on the floor, and obtained permission, though not a Member of the Convention, to make an announcement with which he said he had been charged by Lord Kenmare, a Catholic nobleman :—“ That noble Lord,” said Sir Boyle Roche, “ *and others of his creed*, disavowed



any wish of being concerned in the business of elections, and fully sensible of the favours already bestowed upon them by Parliament felt but one desire, to enjoy them in peace, without seeking in the present distracted state of affairs to raise jealousies, and further embarrass the nation by asking for more.”\*

This was on the 14th of November. But the mean-spirited proceeding of Lord Kenmare excited much indignation amongst the Catholics then in Dublin. They did not indeed hope much from the Convention; but at least they would not permit his Lordship to disavow in their name every manly aspiration. Accordingly, in the afternoon of the same day the princely demagogue, the Earl Bishop of Derry, rose to submit to the consideration of the Convention, “a paper of consequence which referred to a class of men who were deserving of every privilege in common with their fellow-countrymen.” He moved that the paper should be read. It was to this effect:—“Nov. 14th, 1783—At a meeting of the General Committee of the Roman Catholics of Ireland, Sir Patrick Bellew, Bart., in the chair, it was unanimously *Resolved*, That the message relating to us, delivered this morning to the National Convention, was totally unknown to and unauthorized by us. That we do not so widely differ from the rest of mankind, as, by our own act, to prevent the removal of our shackles. That we shall receive with gratitude every indulgence that may be extended to us by the Legislature, and are thankful to our benevolent countrymen for their generous efforts on our behalf. *Resolved*, That Sir P. Bellew be requested to present the foregoing resolutions to the Earl of Bristol as the act of the Roman Catholics of Ireland, and entreat that his Lordship will be pleased to communicate them to the National Convention.” There were few more remarkable men in Ireland in that age of able men, than this singular Bishop of Derry. He was a steady friend to the Catholics; and supported every movement in their favour, when Charlemont and Flood coldly repulsed and resisted every suggestion of this kind. One cannot but wish that the bold Bishop had been commander-in-chief of the Volunteers.

A newly elected Parliament had met a few days before this Convention; and Dublin then presented the extraordinary spectacle of two deliberative bodies, seated in two houses, within sight of each other, treating of the same questions, and composed in part of the same persons; for many Members both of the Lords and Commons were also members of the Convention; and

\* Mr. Plowden speaks of this as a “pretended letter of Lord Kenmare.”

they passed from one building to the other, as debates of importance were to arise in either. The year which was drawing to a close had been a very busy and stirring one in Ireland. The British ministry was that famous "coalition ministry" formed by Lord North and Mr. Fox: the Irish Judicature Bill, one of the series of measures for establishing the independence of Ireland, had been passed by the English Parliament.\* Lord Temple had succeeded the Duke of Portland as Lord Lieutenant; and in his Viceroyalty, it was judged advisable to amuse the Irish with a bauble "to draw away the public mind," says Mr. Plowden, "from speculative questions," especially reform: and accordingly letters patent were issued creating the order of "Knights of St. Patrick;" and the new knights were installed with great pomp on the 17th of March, the festival of the saint. Lord Temple's Government lasted but a few months: he was succeeded by Lord Northington who dissolved the Parliament; and a general election had now resulted in the House of Commons which was already

\* It is the act 23 George III., c. 28, entitled, "An Act for preventing and removing all doubts which have arisen, or may arise, concerning the exclusive rights of the Parliament and courts of Ireland, in matters of legislation and judicature; and for preventing any writ of error or appeal from any of his Majesty's courts in that kingdom from being received, heard, and adjudged, in any of his Majesty's courts in the kingdom of Great Britain."

Amongst the several acts which received the royal assent under the Duke of Portland's administration, was Mr. Eden's act for establishing the national bank. This met with some opposition, but the measure was carried, and the bank opened the year following. By this act (21 and 22 Geo. III., c. 16), the bank was established by the name of The Governor and Company of the Bank of Ireland. The subscribers to it were to pay in £600,000, either in cash or debentures, at 4 per cent. which were to be taken at par, and considered as money. This sum was to be the capital stock of the bank, and the debentures to that amount, when received, were to be cancelled by the vice-treasurers. For these an annuity of £24,000 was to be paid to the company, being equal to the interest payable upon these debentures; the stock was to be redeemable at any time, upon twelve months' notice, after the 1st of January, 1794. Ireland obtained likewise an important acquisition by a bill, "for better securing the liberty of the subject," otherwise called the *Habeas Corpus* act, similar to that formerly passed in England.

The sacramental test, by which the dissenting Protestants were excluded from offices of trust under the Crown, was also repealed, and the nation was gratified by the repeal of the perpetual mutiny bill, and by that long-desired act for making the commission of the judges of that kingdom, to continue *quamdiu se bene gesserint*. An act was also passed to render the manner of conforming from the Popish to the Protestant religion more easy and expeditious. Another for sparing to his Majesty, to be drawn out of this kingdom whenever he should think fit, a force not exceeding 50,000 men. Part of the troops appointed to be kept therein for its defence.

in session in College Green, when the Convention of Volunteers, after first meeting in the Royal Exchange, transferred their meeting to the upper end of Sackville-street. The Convention and the Parliament stood in a very singular relation: the main object of the one was to reform and to purge the other. Certainly Parliament greatly needed to be reformed and purged; but when the medicine was offered at the sword's point, by a body clearly extra-legal and unconstitutional, it was not very likely that they would swallow it. The House of Commons was not only thoroughly vicious in its constitution, being composed chiefly of nominees of great proprietors, but also systematically corrupted by bribes, places, and promises; for it was now more essential to English policy than ever to "secure a Parliamentary majority" upon all questions. Such a Parliament, of which two-thirds were already placemen, pensioners, or recipients of secret-service money, or else expected soon to be in one of those categories, could not long subsist by the side of a dictatorial Convention of armed men, which really represented the armed force of the nation, and which called upon it to come out from the slough of all that profitable corruption. One or the other, Parliament or Convention, it was plain, would have to give way.

When the excitement which followed Lord Kenmare's singular disavowal of manhood had subsided, there was not much further reference to Catholics or their claims; the Convention resolved itself into committees, and appointed sub-committees, to prepare plans of Parliamentary reform, for the consideration of the general body. "Then was displayed a singular scene, and yet such a scene as any, one who considered the almost unvarying disposition of an assembly of that nature, and the particular object for which it was convened, might justly have expected. From every quarter and from every speculatist, great clerks or no clerks at all, was poured in such a multiplicity of plans of reform, some of them ingenious, some which bespoke an exercised and rational mind, but in general so utterly impracticable, 'so rugged and so wild in their attire, they looked not like the offspring of inhabitants of the earth and yet were on it,' that language would sink in portraying this motley band of incongruous fancies, of misshapen theories, valuable only if inefficient, or execrable if efficacious."\*

\* Hardy's *Life of Charlemont*. Hardy was one of Lord Charlemont's coterie, and looked at men and things through the medium of Marino. His maiden speech was made in support of Flood's plan of reform, brought up from the Convention. It should not be forgotten that Hardy—though



But the plan which after some weeks of discussion was eventually adopted, was the workmanship of the ablest head in the assembly. Flood had assumed, because he was able to grasp and resolute to maintain, a predominating superiority over the Convention. It was the ascendancy of a vigorous eloquence, a commanding presence, and a resistless will. With him in all his views, and beyond him in many, was the Bishop of Derry. The plan of reform which these two men approved\* was adopted, and Flood was selected to introduce a bill founded on its principles and suggestions, into Parliament. They imagined that they could terrify the Legislature, and they much miscalculated the power of the Volunteers. That power was already shaken; they had flung away the sympathies of the people; they had by their conduct defined themselves as an armed oligarchy, whose limited notions of freedom extended no farther than their own privileges and claims; they were abhorred and feared by Government and its Parliamentary retainers; they were not trusted by the great body of the nation. It was under unfortunate auspices like these, in the midst of bitter hostility and more dangerous indifference, that Flood, leaving the Rotundo, proceeded on the 29th of December to the House of Commons with a bill, every provision of which was aimed at the Parliamentary existence of two-thirds of the House. He had requested the delegates not to adjourn till its fate was ascertained. But fatigue and disappointment rendered compliance impossible.

Flood's plan embraced many of the principles which have since become incorporated with the British Constitution—the destruction of borough influence, and the creation of a sound county franchise.† There was nothing revolutionary—nothing of that

poor, he was incorruptible—scorned the large offers which were made to him at the Union. He was a “Patriot” not to be purchased, when corruption was most munificent.

\* The bishop would have included the Catholics.

† SCHEME OF REFORM.—“That every Protestant freeholder or leaseholder, possessing a freehold or leasehold for a certain term of years of forty shillings value, resident in any city or borough, should be entitled to vote at the election of a Member for the same.

“That decayed boroughs should be entitled to return representatives by an *extension* of franchise to the neighbouring parishes. That suffrages of the electors should be taken by the sheriff or his deputies, on the same day, at the respective places of election. That pensioners of the Crown receiving their pensions during pleasure, should be incapacitated from sitting in Parliament. That every Member of Parliament accepting a pension for life, or any place under the Crown, should vacate his seat. That each Member should subscribe an oath that he had neither directly nor indirectly given any pecuniary or other consideration with a view of obtaining that suffrage

spirit to which modern usages give the name of radical, in its principles and details. It was only defective in its grand omission. The Catholics obtained no boon, and acquired no liberty by its provisions, and to its fate in the Legislature they were naturally indifferent. We have objected to Grattan that he did not go on with the popular movement—it may with equal justice be alleged against Lord Charlemont and Flood, that by their religious intolerance they impaired the strength of popular opinion and marred the efficacy of all their previous proceedings.

The debate consequent on Flood's motion for leave to bring in his Reform Bill, was bitter and stormy. The whole array of placemen, pensioners, and nominees were in arms against the bill—they could not disguise their rage and amazement—but vented their wrath against the Volunteers in furious terms. And Yelverton, who combined an unmeasured regard for self-interest with a cautious and measured love of liberty, and who had been a Volunteer, denounced the idea of a bill introduced into Parliament at the point of the bayonet.

“If this, as it is notorious it does, originates from an armed body of men, I reject it. Shall we sit here to be dictated to at the point of the bayonet? I honour the Volunteers; they have eminently served their country; but when they turn into a debating society, to reform the Parliament, and regulate the nation; when, with the rude point of the bayonet, they would probe the wounds of the constitution, that require the most skilful hand and delicate instrument; it reduces the question to this: is the Convention or the Parliament of Ireland to deliberate on the affairs of the nation? What have we lately seen? even during the sitting of Parliament, and in the metropolis of the kingdom, armed men lining the streets for armed men going in fastidious show to that pantheon of divinities, the Rotundo; and there sitting in all the parade, and in the mockery of Parliament! Shall we submit to this?

“I ask every man who regards that free constitution established by the blood of our fathers, is such an infringement upon it to be suffered? If it is, and one step more is advanced, it will be too late to retreat. If you have slept, it is high time to awake!”

This was the logic of an attorney-general, who never deals a harder blow to liberty than when he professes himself her most obedient servant. But this transparent hypocrisy was rudely dealt with by Flood:—

of an election. Finally, that the duration of Parliament should not exceed the term of three years.”

“I have not introduced the Volunteers, but if they are aspersed, I will defend their character against all the world. By whom were the commerce and the constitution of this country recovered? —By the Volunteers!

“Why did not the right honourable gentlemen make a declaration against them when they lined our streets—when *Parliament* passed through the ranks of those virtuous armed men to demand the rights of an insulted nation? Are they different men at this day, or is the right honourable gentleman different? He was then one of their body; he is now their accuser! He who saw the streets lined—who rejoiced—who partook in their glory, is *now* their accuser! Are they less wise, less brave, less ardent in their country’s cause, or has their admirable conduct made him their enemy? May they not say, we have not changed, but *you* have changed. The right honourable gentleman cannot bear to hear of Volunteers; but I will ask him, and I will have a STARLING TAUGHT TO HOLLO IN HIS EAR—Who gave you the free trade? who got you the free constitution? who made you a *nation*?—*The Volunteers!*”

“If they were the men you now describe them, why did you accept of their service, why did you not *then* accuse them? If they were so dangerous why did you pass through their ranks with your Speaker at your head to demand a constitution—why did you not *then* fear the ills you now apprehend?”

Grattan supported the bill. He said he loved to blend the idea of Parliament and the Volunteers. They had concurred in establishing the constitution in the last Parliament; he hoped that they would do it in the present. But altogether it must be said that his support was feeble—it wanted heart, it wanted the fire, the inspiration, the genius which carried the Declaration of Rights with triumph through that ineffably corrupt assembly. And yet reform was the only security for his own work—it would have rendered the constitution immortal, and erected an enduring memorial of his glory.†

\* *Declaration of the Volunteer army of Ulster*, “That the dignified conduct of the *army* lately restored to the *imperial* crown of Ireland its original splendour—to nobility, its ancient privileges—and to the nation at large, its inherent rights as a sovereign independent State.” Such was the assumed power of the Volunteers, in 1782. The Parliament was considered then almost anti-national.

† “It was proposed by Government to meet this question in the most decided manner, and to bring to issue the contest between the Government and this motley assembly usurping its rights. This idea met with very considerable support. A great heartiness showed itself among the principal men of consequence and fortune, and a decided spirit of opposition to the unreasonable encroachments appeared with every man attached to the Admini-



But if Grattan lacked his ancient fire, the opposition which was given by the vile brood of faction was not deficient in spirit; it was furious and fierce. The coarsest invectives and the vulgarest ribaldry were heaped upon the Volunteers—the question of Parliamentary Reform was lost sight of in the rancorous malignity of the hour, and the debate became a chaos of vituperation, misrepresentation, and personality. At length the question was put, and Flood's motion was lost. The numbers were, for the motion 77, against it 157. After the result had been ascertained, it was thought fit by the Attorney-General (Yelverton) to move, "That it has now become indispensably necessary to declare that the House will maintain its just rights and privileges against all encroachments whatsoever." This was a declaration of war, less against reform than against the Volunteers. The gauntlet was thrown down to them—did they dare to take it up?

For awhile the convention awaited a message from the Commons—but no message of triumph came to crown their hopes. The scene was embarrassing—lassitude had succeeded excitement—silence crept slowly on the noisy anticipations of victory. At last, adjournment was suggested—the dramatic effect was lost, the dramatic spirit had passed away. The Convention broke up, to await, without the theatric pomp of full assembly, the details of discomfiture, insult, and defeat.

The interval was well used by those who secretly trembled at the issue of a direct collision between Government and the Volunteers, or who had not the boldness to guide the storm which they had the temerity to raise. Rumours there were of secret conclaves where cowardly counsels took the place of manly foresight and sagacious boldness—of discussions with closed doors,

stration. The idea stated was to oppose the *leave* to bring in a bill for the reform of Parliament in the first stage on the ground of the petition originating in an assembly unconstitutional and illegal, and meant to awe and control the Legislature. This bold mode of treating it was certainly most proper: at the same time it was subject to the defections of those who had been instructed on this idea of reform, and those who were still anxious to retain a small degree of popularity amongst the Volunteers. To have put it with a resolution would have given us at least fourteen votes. Grattan having pledged himself to the idea of reform of Parliament, could not see the distinction between the refusal of leave on the ground of its having come from an exceptionable body, and the absolute denial of receiving any plan of reform. He voted against us, and spoke; *but his speech evidently showed that he meant us no harm*, and on the question of the resolution to support Parliament he voted with us. The resolutions are gone to the Lords, who will concur in them, except it is said, Lord Mountmorris, Lord Aldborough, and Lord Charlemont."—*Letter of the Lord Lieutenant to Charles James Fox*, 30th November 1783.

where the men who had led the national army in the whole campaign of freedom, canvassed the propriety of sacrificing to their own fears, that body, whose virtue and renown had conferred on them a reflected glory,\* whilst some writers have represented the adjournment of the Convention, and the extinction of the Volunteers, or as it was called by Grattan, "their retirement to cultivate the blessings of peace," as the just and natural issue to their useful and brilliant career.† As well might it be said that the Union was the just and natural result of the constitution of 1782. And they who abandoned the Volunteers, and allowed their organization to crumble and decline, are answerable to their country for the consequences of that fatal measure of political tergiversation. A large meeting of "particular friends" assembled at Lord Charlemont's on the Sunday.‡ It was unanimously agreed that the public peace—which did not appear in any particular danger at the time—was the first object to be considered. It is to be regretted that Hardy is not more explicit on the subject of this meeting. It would have been fortunate had he informed us who were the parties concerned in this transaction; for it might have furnished a key to the subsequent conduct of many men, whose proceedings were considered inexplicable at the time. The result of their deliberations was important. The Volunteers were to receive their rebuff quietly; they were to separate in peace and good will to all men; meekly to digest the contumelies of the Government retainers; and following the advice of some of their officers, to hang up their arms in the Temple of Liberty. The advice was good, if the temple had been built.

On Monday, the 1st of December, the Convention met. Captain Moore, one of the delegates, was about to comment on the reception of their Reform Bill by Parliament, when Lord Charlemont called him to order. Upon which, in a very dignified way, Henry Flood detailed the insulting reception of their bill by the Legislature; and well aware of the temper of some of the most influential men in the Convention, he counselled moderation. But what other policy than submission was on their cards? They had put themselves in antagonism to Parliament—they had been treated with contempt and defiance—their plan had not been even discussed, but contumeliously rejected because it was the suggestion of men with arms in their hands—*arms which they dared not use*. There were only two courses open—war or submission. They adopted the latter course, not without some re-

\* Barrington's Rise and Fall of the Irish Nation, c. 19, p. 377.

† Grattan's Life, by Henry Grattan, c. 5.

‡ Hardy's Life of Charlemont, vol. ii., p. 138.

bellious pride, and a flash of the old spirit that had burned so brightly at Dungannon.

Looking back over these events, one cannot resist the conclusion that if the Convention had generously and at once thrown open the door of the Constitution to the Catholics, Lord Charlemont might at this juncture have marched down to that den of corruption in College Green, cleared it out, locked the door, and thereafter dictated his Reform Bill by way of general orders; but Charlemont was not the man to strike such a blow; and besides, he and the Convention had alienated, or, at least, left in a state of indifference, the great body of the nation which would else have borne them triumphantly to the goal of perfect and permanent freedom.

The Convention adjourned, to meet next day. Mr. Flood moved a tame address to the House, declaring that seeking Parliamentary reform "was not to be imputed to any spirit of innovation in them." They adjourned again; but next morning Lord Charlemont repaired somewhat earlier than usual to the Rotundo, with several of his friends, and, after some formal resolutions, pronounced the Convention dissolved. "From this time," says Dr. Madden, "the power of the Volunteers was broken. The Government resolved to let the institution die a natural death; at least, to aim no blow at it in public; but when it is known that the Hon. Col. Robert Stewart (father of Lord Castlereagh) was not only a member of the Convention—a delegate from the County Down—but a chairman of a sub-committee, and that he was the intimate friend of Lord Charlemont, the nature of the hostility that Government put in practice against the institution will be easily understood. While the Volunteers were parading before Lord Charlemont, or manifesting their patriotism in declarations of resistance to the Parliament, perfidy was stalking in their camp, and it rested not till it had trampled on the ashes of their institution.

The Volunteers through the country received the accounts of their delegates with indignant amazement. They beat to arms—they met—and resolved. But the binding principle was relaxed; doubt, suspicion, and alarm pervaded the ranks that had been so firmly knit; their resolutions, though still warmed with the spirit of fiery eloquence, were but sounding words, unheeded by a Government which had planted too securely the seeds of disunion, to fear the threats of men without leaders, without mutual confidence, without reliance on themselves. The Bishop of Derry became their idol; but it was beyond his power to restore them to their commanding position. Flood had gone to England, either



fired with new ambition, or in despair of effecting his great objects at home. The Bishop was a bad adviser, too bold and unguarded, and the Government amazed at an extraordinary reply which he gave to an address of the Bill of Rights' Battalion, a northern corps, seriously canvassed the propriety of his arrest. His reply concluded with a memorable political aphorism, "Tyranny is not government, and allegiance is due only to protection." But he was not prosecuted, nor arrested. It would have been a rash, it was a useless step. The natural progress of events effected what a measure of severity would probably have retarded, or rendered impossible—the destruction of the Volunteers. Division of opinion gained ground amongst them, yet they continued their reviews, they published their proceedings, they passed their resolutions. But, month by month, and year by year, their numbers diminished, their military gatherings became less splendid, their exposition of political opinion was less regarded by the nation, or feared by the Government.

The Reform Bill presented by the Convention having failed, Flood, after his return from England, determined to test the sincerity of the Parliament in the alleged cause of its rejection. The Legislature declared that they had spurned the bill because it emanated from a military body. In March, 1784, he introduced another measure of Parliamentary Reform, backed by numerous petitions from the counties. The bill was read a second time, but was rejected on the motion for its committal, by a majority of seventy-four. Grattan gave a cold support. It became now clear, that the opposition was given to reform, not because it was the demand of a military body, but because the principle was odious to a corrupt Parliament. A meeting of the representatives of thirty-one corps took place at Belfast, to make preparations for a review, and they adopted a resolution that they would not associate with any regiment at the ensuing demonstration, which should continue under the command of officers who opposed Parliamentary Reform.\* However, natural was their indignation at the coolness of some, and the hostility of other professing "Patriots" to the great measure of constitutional change, the effect of this resolution was unfortunate. It yielded a plausible excuse to many of the officers to secede from the Volunteer body—it worked out wonderfully the policy of division which Government was in every way pursuing—it defined the distinctions which existed in the Volunteer Associations, and widened the fatal breach.

\* Historical Collections relative to Belfast, p. 200.

We may here anticipate a little, in order to close the story of the Volunteers. The rejection of the Reform Bill was followed by an attempt to get up a National Congress, by Flood, Napper Tandy, and others. They addressed requisitions to the sheriffs of the counties, calling on them to summon their bailiwicks for the purpose of electing representatives. Some few complied with the requisition—most of them refused. The Attorney-General (Fitzgibbon) threatened to proceed by attachment against those who had obeyed the mandate, and by a mixture of personal daring and ability, succeeded in preventing Mr. Reilly, the Sheriff of Dublin, from taking the chair of an intended electoral meeting. Delegates were, however, selected in some quarters, and in October, a few individuals assembled in William Street, to hold the Congress. The debate was with closed doors; the Bishop of Derry was not present; Flood attended, and detailed his plan of Reform, in which the Catholics were not included. The omission gave offence to the Congress, and Flood, indignant at the want of support, retired. After three days sitting, the Congress adjourned. It vanished as if it were the melancholy ghost of the National Convention.

These proceedings were alluded to in the speech which opened the Session, January, 1785. They were characterized as “lawless outrages, and unconstitutional proceedings.” The address in reply applied the same terms to the transactions in connection with the National Congress; and this drew from Grattan a memorable speech, and one which with reference to the Volunteers is historic. It marks the transition point when the old Volunteers ceased, and a new body composed of a different class of men, and ruled by politicians with very different views, commenced a career which terminated only in the establishment of the United Irishmen. Grattan, in the debate on the address, after defending the reform party and principles generally, from the attacks contained in the Viceroy’s speech, said,\* I “would now wish to draw the attention of the House to the alarming measure of drilling the lowest classes of the populace, by which a stain had been put on the character of the Volunteers. The old, the original Volunteers had become respectable, because they represented the property of the nation; but attempts had been made to arm the poverty of the kingdom. They had originally been the armed property—were they to become *the armed beggary*?” To the Congress—to the parties who had presented petitions for reform he addressed indignant reproof. They had, he said, been

\* Grattan’s Speeches, vol. i., p. 212.

guilty of the wildest indiscretion ; they had gone much too far, and, if they went on, they would overturn the laws of their country.

It was an unfortunate period for the interests of Irish liberty, which Grattan selected, thus to dis sever the ties between the Volunteers and him. They had begun to perceive that without the co-operation of the Catholics, it would be unreasonable to expect to obtain a reformed Parliament, independent of England. The men of the Ulster Plantation were the first to recognize and act upon this obvious truth. They carried their toleration so far as to march to the chapel, and to attend Mass. Had proper advantage been taken of these dispositions of the people, the result would have been the acquisition of a measure of Parliamentary Reform, which would have insured the stability of the settlement of 1782. But they were left without guides, when most a ruling mind was required ; nor is it surprising that ulterior views began to influence the ardent temperament, and to excite the angry passions of a disappointed people. But these considerations belong to the history of a later period, when the Volunteers had merged into that great and wonderful confederacy, which, within a few years, threatened the stability of the English dominion in Ireland.

The regular army had been increased to 15,000 men, with the approbation of the most distinguished founders of the constitution of 1782—the next act of hostility was one in which Gardiner, who had been an active officer in the Volunteers, took the leading part. On the 14th of February, 1785, he moved that £20,000 be granted to his Majesty for the purpose of clothing the militia. This was intended to be a fatal blow. It was aimed by a treacherous hand. The motion was supported by Langrishe, Denis Daly, Arthur Wolfe, and Grattan. Fitzgibbon assailed the Volunteers with official bitterness. He reiterated the charges of Grattan, that they had admitted into their ranks a low description of men—their constitution was changed—they had degenerated into practices inimical to the peace of the country. They were, however, not left undefended, Curran, Hardy, and Newenham stepped forward to their vindication. These men pointed out the benefits of the institution—the Volunteers in time of war had protected the country, and preserved internal quiet—no militia was then needed—why was it required in peace ? The proposition was a censure on the Volunteers.

Grattan replied :—"The Volunteers had no right whatsoever to be displeased at the establishment of a militia ; and if they had



expressed displeasure, the dictate of armed men ought to be disregarded by Parliament.

“The right honourable member had introduced the resolution upon the most constitutional ground. To establish a militia—he could not see how that affected the Volunteers; and it would be a hard case, indeed, if members of Parliament should be afraid to urge such measures as they deemed proper, for fear of giving offence to the Volunteers. The situation of the House would be truly unfortunate if the name of the Volunteers could intimidate it. I am ready to allow that the great and honourable body of men—the primitive Volunteers, deserved much of their country; but I am free to say, that they who now assume the name have much degenerated. It is said that they rescued the constitution, that they forced Parliament to assert its rights, and therefore Parliament should surrender the constitution into their hands. But it is a mistake to say they forced Parliament: they stood at the back of Parliament, and supported its authority; and when they thus acted with Parliament, they acted to their own glory; but when they attempted to dictate, they became nothing. When Parliament repelled the mandate of the Convention, they went back, and they acted with propriety; and it will ever happen so when Parliament has spirit to assert its own authority.

“Gentlemen are mistaken if they imagine that the Volunteers are the same as they formerly were, when they committed themselves in support of the State, and the exclusive authority of the Parliament of Ireland, at the Dungannon meeting. The resolutions published of late hold forth a very different language.

“Gentlemen talk of ingratitude. I cannot see how voting a militia for the defence of the country is ingratitude to the Volunteers. The House has been very far from ungrateful to them. While they acted with Parliament, Parliament thanked and applauded them; but in attempting to act against Parliament, they lost their consequence. Ungrateful! Where is the instance? It cannot be meant, that because the House rejected the mandate which vile incendiaries had urged the Convention to issue; because, when such a wound was threatened to the constitution, the House declared that it was necessary to maintain the authority of Parliament, that therefore the House was ungrateful!”

The Volunteers lingered some years after this, They held annual reviews—they passed addresses and resolutions—but, henceforward, their proceedings were without effect. The details of their decay do not belong to the history of the Volunteers of 1782. That body practically expired with the Convention of

Dublin. Their old leaders fell away—the men of wealth abandoned them, and new men—men, not without generous qualities and high ambition, but with perilous and revolutionary views—succeeded to the control. And when, at length, the Volunteers having come into direct collision with the regular army, and wisely declined the contest, the Government issued its mandate, that every assemblage of the body should be dispersed by force, even the phantom of the army of Ireland had passed away from the scene for ever.\*

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## CHAPTER XXII.

1784—1786.

IRELAND was now in many respects an independent nation. Enjoying for the first time in her history an unrestricted trade, a sovereign judiciary, the writ of *Habeas Corpus*, and a Parliament acknowledged to be the sovereign Legislature free from the dictation of an English Privy Council, the country did certainly begin almost immediately to make a rapid advance in material prosperity. Many absentees returned and spent their incomes at home: the revival of other branches of industry retrieved in some degree the unwholesome competition for farms, which had left the unfortunate and friendless peasantry at the absolute mercy of their landlords. Besides all this, the very proud feeling of national independence seems to have kindled a sort of vital energy throughout the farthest extremities of the land. On the whole, although there was still much distress among the poor, and appeals to Parliament for their relief, there was soon visible a dawn of prosperity in Ireland.

Yet the political situation was evidently anomalous and insecure. Ireland had not like England a responsible body of Cabinet Ministers accountable to her own Parliament. The Lord Lieutenant and Irish Secretary ruled as before; and although they were appointed, it was said, by the King of Ireland, they really held their offices and received their instructions from the ministers of England; and their whole care was expected to be, and was, in fact, to maintain by every possible means the para-

\* A few country corps had fixed upon holding a review at Doah, in the county of Antrim. The army marched to the spot to disperse them; but the Volunteers avoided assembling, and thus gave up the ghost.—*Dr. Mac-Nevin's Pieces of Irish History*. p. 58.

mount ascendancy of that more powerful kingdom. This could only be accomplished by the creation of more and more places, the still greater extension of the pension list, and more direct and shameless bribery. In short we shall soon see that organized corruption developed itself during the era of "independence" with more deadly power than ever before, until it swelled at last to that deluge of corruption, that perfect paroxysm of plunder, which bore down everything before it at the era of the "Union."

Lord Northington, on a change of ministry in England, resigned his Viceroyalty on the 7th of January, 1784; and on the 24th of February was succeeded by the Duke of Rutland. Just before this change, the revenue of Ireland being again, as usual, inadequate to the expenditure £300,000 was ordered to be borrowed to meet the deficiency.

On the 26th of February, Parliament met. Mr. Gardiner moved the address to the Duke of Rutland; and then there came pouring into the House thirteen petitions for a "Reform in Parliament." It was on this measure the people's minds were now chiefly bent. They were irritated and disappointed at the manner in which the House of Commons had flung out the Reform Bill introduced by Mr. Flood in the name of the Volunteer Convention. They began to perceive that with a Parliament so constituted, Ireland could not really be said to control her own destinies: and they did not yet sufficiently comprehend that for this precise reason, England would always steadily oppose all reform—and would be able to oppose it with success because the very corruption of Parliament which was an injury and scandal to Ireland was the great arm and agent of British domination here.

It was now on the 13th of March, that Mr. Flood made his renewed motion for a Parliamentary Reform; not now as a member of the dictatorial Volunteer Convention, but as an individual member. A few sentences of his speech may be given to show the notoriety of the rotten borough system; and how audaciously it was defended as a right of property. He admitted, it would be thought by certain gentlemen injurious to their private interest, if the constitution were restored to its original security; but they must also admit, that it was contrary to every principle of right and justice, that individuals should be permitted to send into that house, two, four, or six Members of Parliament, to make a traffic of venal boroughs, as if they were household utensils. It seemed a point agreed upon in England, that a Parliamentary Reform was necessary; he should mention, he said, the opinion given by Lord Chatham, upon whose posthumous fame the present administration so firmly stood defended by the nation, though that great



and illustrious man had been neglected for ten years by the public, and so large a portion of his valuable life was suffered to be lost to the community. What were his sentiments on that important matter? His words most strongly enforced its necessity; in his answer to the address of the City of London, in which he said, that a reform in Parliament was absolutely necessary, in order to infuse fresh vigour into the constitution and that rotten boroughs ought to be stricken off.

This measure, opening the franchise to Protestant freeholders, was by several members opposed as being oppressive to the Catholics. Sir Boyle Roche, the very man who had but lately hurried to the Convention to carry Lord Kenmare's slavish self-denying message, refusing all electoral rights for the Catholics—this Sir Boyle, only anxious to defeat the Reform by any means, used this argument against it:—

Sir Boyle Roche said, "the design of the bill was to transfer the franchise of election from the few to the many; or in other words, to deprive the present possessors of the patronage of boroughs, and give it to another set of men; while they were endeavouring to gratify one set of men, they should not act as tyrants to another. This bill would be a proscriptive act against the Roman Catholics, who would be all turned out of their farms to make room for forty-shilling freeholders." There was an animated debate; but its issue could not be one moment doubtful at the Castle. At four o'clock on Sunday morning the division took place: ayes, 85; noes, 159. It was clear that the Government had still its steady working majority in that corrupt assembly, on all questions which were not left open questions, and that there was no measure so little likely to be left an open question as Parliamentary Reform.

Two other subjects of great national importance were brought before Parliament in this session; a bill for regulation of the revenue by Mr. Grattan, and a bill to lay protective duties on the importation of manufactured goods. This latter measure seems to have been greatly needed; and the anxiety of the public for its success is a still further proof of the real meaning which in the Volunteering times was attached to the cry "Free trade, or else—," that is to say, freedom for the Legislature of Ireland to regulate, protect, tax, admit, or prohibit all branches of Irish trade for Ireland's own benefit.

In view of the continual rejection of all projects of reform, it is no wonder that men's minds turned away from Parliament; and that plans of a revolutionary character began to be agitated. Such was the idea of a National Congress. The sheriffs of Dublin

were requested to convene a preparatory meeting: they did so, for the 7th of June, 1784: but as this project eventuated in nothing important, we might omit all mention of it, were it not that the resolutions at this meeting, while denouncing the the venality of Parliament introduced into their resolutions and their addresses to the King very strong expressions of their desire to emancipate the Catholics. In the resolutions we read: "We call upon you therefore, and thus conjure you, that in this important work you join with us as fellow-subjects, countrymen, and friends, as men embarked in the general cause, to remove a general calamity; and for this we propose, that five persons be elected from each county, city, and great town in this kingdom, to meet in National Congress at some convenient place in this city, on Monday, the 25th day of October next, there to deliberate, digest, and determine on such measures, as may seem to them most conducive to re-establish the constitution on a pure and permanent basis, and secure to the inhabitants of this kingdom, peace, liberty, and safety.

"And while we thus contend, as far as in us lies, for our constitutional rights and privileges, we recommend to your consideration the state of our suffering fellow-subjects, the Roman Catholics of this kingdom, whose emancipation from the restraints, under which they still labour, we consider not only as equitable, but essentially conducive to the general union and prosperity of the kingdom."

And in the address to the King, they say:—"We farther entreat your Majesty's permission to condemn that remnant of the Penal Code of Laws, which still oppresses our Roman Catholic fellow-subjects; laws which tend to prohibit education and liberality, restrain certain privileges, and proscribe industry, love of liberty, and patriotism."

The very introduction of these liberal and tolerant ideas into the preliminary proceedings frightened off the leading men of the old Volunteers.

In an address presented by the Ulster corps to their general, the Earl of Charlemont, after some strong expressions of their detestation of aristocratic tyranny, they hinted at the necessity of calling in the aid of the Catholics, as the most just as well as effectual means of opposing it with success. In answer to this address, the Earl of Charlemont lamented that, for the first time, he felt himself obliged to differ from them in sentiment. He was free from every illiberal prejudice against the Catholics, and full of good-will towards that very respectable body, but he could not refrain from the most ardent entreaties, that they would desist

from a pursuit, that would fatally clog and impede the prosecution of their favourite purpose.

As this nobleman was highly and deservedly respected, his opinion was eagerly embraced, both by the timid, whose apprehensions were alarmed at the bold extent of the project, and by a great number whose prejudices against the Catholics appear to have been suspended from conveniency or fashion though never conquered by principle. In the month of October, the thanks of the Corporation of the City of Dublin were voted him for his conduct on that occasion.

The meeting of a National Congress was a measure of too alarming a nature, not to attract the most serious attention of Government; and it appears to have been their resolution to take the most vigorous steps for preventing it if possible. A few days previous to that which was fixed for the election of delegates for the city of Dublin, the Attorney-General addressed a letter to the sheriffs, expressing his very great surprise at having read a summons signed by them calling a meeting for the purpose in question. He observed, that by this proceeding, they had been guilty of a most outrageous breach of their duty; and that if they proceeded, they would be responsible to the laws of their country, and he should hold himself bounden to prosecute them in the Court of King's Bench, for a conduct, which he considered so highly criminal, that he could not overlook it. These threats succeeded so far as to intimidate the sheriffs from attending the meeting in their official capacity; but the meeting was nevertheless holden, delegates were chosen; and in reference for the attorney's letter, several strong resolutions were agreed to, relative to the right of assembling themselves for the redress of grievances. Government having once set their faces against the election and assembling of delegates, from denouncing threats, they proceeded to punishments.

Mr. Riley, high sheriff for the county of Dublin, in consequence of his having called together, and presided at an assembly of freeholders, who met on the 19th of August, 1784, for the purpose of choosing and instructing their delegates, was the first object of ministerial prosecution. The Attorney-General proceeded against him by attachment from the Court of King's Bench. The assembly, and the resolutions they came to on that occasion, signed by Mr. Riley, in his character of sheriff for the county, were both declared to be illegal, and Mr. Riley was sentenced by the Court to pay a fine of five marks (£3 6s. 8d.), and to be imprisoned one week.

This mode of legal process, except for the purpose of bringing



persons before the Court, to receive the sentence of such Court for contempt of, and disobedience to its orders and directions, has so seldom been resorted to, that even the legality of the process itself, on any other ground, had remained a matter of general doubt and uncertainty.

In the present case it met with much less opposition than might have been expected. Clamours without doors, and debates within, on the subject, there certainly were, but both too feeble and ill-concerted to promise any success. The new division of the Volunteers into parties, took off the general attention to this attack upon the use of juries, which, in any other moment, would not have been so tamely tolerated. Of such import is it, when over-strong measures are to be attempted, to prepare the public for the reception of them by internal disunion or alarm. Government did not confine their prosecutions to Mr. Riley. Having once adopted a mode of proceeding, which so effectually answered the end, for which they designed it, informations were moved for, and attachments granted against the different magistrates, who called the meetings, and signed the respective resolutions of the freeholders in the counties of Roscommon and Leitrim. At the same time, the press too came under the lash of the Attorney-General : and the printers and publishers of such newspapers, as had inserted the obnoxious resolutions, suffered with the magistrates, who had signed them.

Notwithstanding these violent measures which administration were pursuing, the National Congress met, pursuant to its appointment, on the 25th day of October. But as it was far from being complete in point of number, and several of its most respectable members chose to absent themselves, they adjourned, after having passed a number of resolutions to the same purport with those that had been agreed to at the previous meeting ; and exhorted in the most earnest manner the communities, which had not sent representatives : "if they respected their own consistency, if they wished for the success of a Parliamentary Reform, and as they tendered the perpetual liberty and prosperity of their country, not to let pass that opportunity of effecting the great and necessary confirmation of the constitution."

The divisions of the Volunteers were encouraged by Government ; and for that purpose discord and turbulence were rather countenanced than checked in many counties, particularly upon the delicate and important expedient of admitting the Catholics to the elective franchise, a question, which it was artfully attempted to connect with the now declining cause of Parliamentary reform. Through a long series of years Government

had never wanted force to quell internal commotions ; and it seemed to be now dreaded lest a union of Irishmen, should extinguish the old means of creating dissension. The desire of disuniting the Volunteers begat inattention to the grievances of the discontented and distressed peasantry of the south : that wretched people once more assumed the style of *Whiteboys* : and for some time committed their depredations with impunity, particularly against Kilkenny ; until a stop was put to them by the vigorous efforts of the Rev. Dr. Troy, then the Roman Catholic bishop of Ossory, and the clergy of his diocese ; for which successful exertions he received the most satisfactory acknowledgments from Government.

As the unanimity of the Volunteers diminished, their spirit and exertions abated : something, however, was to be attempted before the meeting of the Parliament. On the 2nd of January, 1785, the second meeting of the Delegates was had at Dublin, at which were present the representatives of twenty-seven counties, and of most of the cities and considerable towns of the kingdom, amounting in the whole to more than 200 persons. Their proceedings appear to have been of the same nature as those before adopted, with this only difference, that in the proposed application to the House of Commons, it was agreed to confine themselves to the most general terms, and to leave the mode of redress as free and open as possible to the consideration of Parliament.

The British Parliament sat to the 25th of August, 1784, and met again on the 25th of January, 1785 : and from his Majesty's speech it appears, that " their first concern was the settlement of all differences with Ireland. Amongst the objects which now require consideration, I must particularly recommend to your earnest attention the adjustments of such points in the commercial intercourse between Great Britain and Ireland as are not yet finally arranged : the system which will unite both kingdoms the most closely on principles of reciprocal advantage, will, I am persuaded, best insure the general prosperity of my dominions."

The Parliament of Ireland met on the 20th of January, 1785, when the Lord Lieutenant addressed them in a speech recommending to their attention the regulation of the trade and commerce between the two islands. This was the prelude to Mr. Orde's famous "Commercial Propositions" for a treaty of commerce between England and Ireland. This was a favourite measure of Mr. Pitt's, and he had set his heart upon it. The terms of the proposed commercial settlement had been previously negotiated between Mr. Orde, Secretary for Ireland, and certain Irish commissioners for that purpose : and on the 7th of February Mr.

Orde laid the project before the House of Commons in the form of eleven resolutions. In this original form the Commercial Propositions were not very open to objection: for, although most favourable on the whole to England, they looked fair and just. The only one which sounded alarming was the eleventh and last, which was in these words:—"11th. *Resolved*, That for the better protection of trade, whatever sum the gross hereditary revenue of this kingdom (after deducting all drawbacks, repayments, or bounties, granted in the nature of drawbacks), shall produce, over and above the sum of £656,000 in each year of peace, wherein the annual revenues shall be equal to the annual expenses, and in each year of war, without regard to such equality, should be appropriated towards the support of the naval force of the empire, in such manner as the Parliament of this kingdom shall direct."

This excited some opposition in the House, Mr. Brownlow indignantly exclaiming against the idea of their becoming a *tributary nation*. Mr. Grattan supported the resolutions; and after some debate they were all agreed to by both Houses. On the 22nd of the same month the eleven Resolutions, as transmitted from Ireland, were read in a Committee of the British House of Commons; and Mr. Pitt spoke most earnestly in favour of their passage, and of a definitive treaty or law founded upon them. There was some opposition and delay. The commercial public of England took the alarm; petitions poured in, the first of them from Liverpool; Lancashire sent a petition signed by 80,000 persons; sixty-four petitions in all were presented, all against the measure, which was represented as a concession to Irish commerce, therefore ruinous to England. At length, on the 12th of May, 1785, Mr. Pitt brought forward in consequence or under pretext of the new light thrown on the subject by the examinations, petitions and reports, a new series of resolutions, twenty in number. The principal additions to the new scheme were to provide.—1st, That whatever navigation laws the British Parliament should thereafter think fit to enact for the preservation of her marine, the same should be passed by the Legislature of Ireland. 2ndly, Against the importing into Ireland, and from thence into Great Britain, of any other West India merchandises than such as were the produce of our own colonies; and 3rdly, That Ireland should debar itself from trading with any of the countries beyond the Cape of Good Hope to the Straits of Magellan, so long as it should be thought necessary to continue the charter of the English East India Company.

In short this new scheme of Mr. Pitt was plainly intended as a mode of repealing and annulling the free trade of the Volun-



leers. The Volunteers were by this time disunited, disbanded, and disorganized, and the cannon of Napper Tandy had gone back to the foundry. The new series of resolutions gave occasion to eager debates in the British House of Commons. It is with regret that one finds Mr. Burke not only supporting the propositions but supporting them on the express ground that they went to re-establish the supremacy of England over Ireland. He said:—"To consult the interest of England and Ireland, to unite and consolidate them into one, was a task he would undertake, as that by which he could best discharge the duties he owed to both. To Ireland, independence of Legislature had been given; she was now a co-ordinate, though less powerful state; but pre-eminence and dignity were due to England; it was she alone that must bear the weight and burden of the empire; she alone must pour out the ocean of wealth necessary for the defence of it; Ireland, and other parts, might empty their little urns to swell the tide; they might wield their little puny tridents; but, the great trident that was to move the world, must be grasped by England alone, and dearly it cost her to hold it. Independence of Legislature had been granted to Ireland; but no other independence could Great Britain give her, without reversing the order and decree of nature; Ireland could not be separated from England; she could not exist without her; she must ever remain under the protection of England, *her guardian angel*."

There was another Irishman in the English House of Commons, who did not see the matter altogether in this light. Richard Brinsley Sheridan, speaking of Mr. Orde, the English Secretary for Ireland, with his insidious propositions, said:—"Ireland newly escaped from harsh trammels and severe discipline, was treated like a high-mettled horse, hard to catch; and the Irish Secretary was sent back to the field to soothe and coax him, with a sieve of provender in the one hand and a bridle in the other." When the propositions, as altered, had passed the Commons, and were brought into the House of Lords, it was curious to see the question treated, not as a matter of commerce, but as a project for a future *union*; which in fact it was. Lord Lansdowne treated "the idea of a union as a thing impracticable. High-minded and jealous as were the people of Ireland, we must first learn whether they will consent to give up their distinct empire, their Parliament, and all the honours which belong to them." After debate, however, the resolutions passed the Lords by a great majority. Mr. Pitt then brought in a bill, founded upon them, which was carried, and was followed up by an address to his Majesty, voted by both Houses of Parliament, wherein they

acquainted him with what they had done, and that it remained for the Parliament of Ireland to judge and decide thereupon. On the 12th of August Mr. Secretary Orde moved the House for leave to bring in a bill, which was a mere transcript of that moved by the English minister. The debates on this occasion, and more especially on the side of opposition, were long and animated. After a vehement debate, which lasted eighteen hours, the House divided at nine in the morning, upon the motion of Mr. Orde to bring in the bill. Ayes, 127; noes, 108. Such a division, upon a preliminary stage, was equivalent to a defeat: and on the Monday following (15th of August) Mr. Orde moved the first reading of the bill, and that it should be printed, declaring at the same time that he did not intend to make any further progress in the business during the present Session. He had completed his duty respecting that measure. In short, the bill was adjourned, and finally lost. On the same 15th of August Mr. Flood moved a resolution:—"Resolved, That we hold ourselves bound not to enter into engagement to give up the sole and exclusive right of the Parliament of Ireland, in all cases whatsoever, as well externally as commercially and internally." The bill was withdrawn: Mr. Flood withdrew his motion; and from that hour Mr. Pitt determined to lay his plans for the final extinguishment of Irish nationality and its total absorption into that of Great Britain; in other words, for the "Union."

When the Duke of Rutland again met the Parliament in January, 1785, his speech intimated that there was a strong desire on the part of Government to revive the question of the Commercial Propositions: but there now began to be a considerable organized opposition to the Castle—an opposition which had afterwards to be "broken down" by the usual and well-understood methods.

Mr. Conolly and some other gentlemen of great landed property in the country, who had been much in the habit of supporting Government, now appeared to have taken a decided part in the opposition to the Duke of Rutland's administration. On the same day the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir John Parnell) stated that the debt of the nation was £3,044,167; on which Mr. Conolly observed that the expenses of Government every year increased; that the minister came regularly to that House to complain of the deficiency in the revenue, and demanded a loan, which was granted on his promise of future economy: at last the revenue was raised by new taxes to equal the expense, and still the expense had increased; he (as also Mr. Grattan) insisted upon the necessity of making a stand against the growth

of expense, or else their constitution and commerce were at an end. Accordingly, on the 9th of February, Mr. Conolly moved the following resolutions:—1st, That the House did in the last Session grant certain new taxes, estimated at £140,000 *per annum*, for the purpose of putting an end to the accumulation of debt. 2nd, That should the said taxes be continued it was absolutely necessary that the expenses of the nation should be confined to her annual income. After a warm and long debate, there appeared upon a division 73 for Mr. Conolly's resolutions, and 149 against them. This was extremely discouraging, and even provoking, to the people out of doors who had those taxes to pay; especially as every one knew that those who in Parliament voted against all retrenchment and economy, were themselves continually swelling the public expenditure by soliciting pensions or by complacently voting to one another immense sums of the people's money.

However, the Patriots, in the same session, returned to the charge—this time against the intolerable pension list.

Mr. Forbes led the van on the attack, and on the 6th of March moved the House, after a very animated speech, that the present application and amount of pensions on the civil establishment, were a grievance to the nation, and demanded redress. The motion produced a very interesting debate; but it shared the same fate as the bill he afterwards introduced to limit the amount of pensions, which was lost by a majority of 134 against 78. This bill was most strenuously opposed by Sir Hercules Langrishe, Mr. Mason, Mr. George Ponsonby, the Attorney-General, and the most leading men on the treasury bench, as a direct and indecent invasion of the royal prerogative. The Attorney-General asserted, that the principle of the bill went to the most dangerous extent of any bill that had ever come before Parliament; it went to rob the Crown of its responsibility in the disposal of the public money, and to convey it to that House, and even to the House of Peers. He then begged leave to remind the members of what happened after the passing of their favourite vote of 1757. The members of that House caballed together, forming themselves into little parties, and voting to each other hundreds of thousands. And as no Government could go on without the aid of their leaders, it cost that nation more to break through that *puisne* aristocracy, which had made a property of Parliament, than what it would by the pension list for many years. On the side of the "Patriots," all the old arguments were urged with redoubled force against the pension list. Mr. Grattan gave great offence by the strong and harsh assertion, with which he closed his speech on



Mr. Forbes's motion, viz. :—" *If he should vote that pensions were not a grievance, he should vote an impudent, an insolent, and a public lie.*"

Mr. Curran took a brilliant part in this debate. Alluding to the various classes of foreign and domestic knaves who were the objects of the royal bounty, he said :—" This polyglot of wealth, this museum of curiosities, the pension list, embraces every link in the human chain; every description of men, women, and children, from the exalted excellence of a Hawke or Rodney, to the debased situation of the lady who humbleth herself that she may be exalted. But the lessons it inculcates form its greatest perfection; it teaches that sloth and vice may eat that bread, which virtue and honesty may starve for after they had earned it. It teaches the idle and dissolute to look up for that support, which they are too proud to stoop to earn. It directs the minds of men to an entire reliance on the ruling power of the State, who feeds the ravens of the royal aviary, that cry continually for food. It teaches them to imitate those saints on the pension list, that are like the lilies of the field, they toil not, neither do they spin, and yet are arrayed like Solomon in all his glory. In fine, it teaches a lesson, which indeed they might have learned from Epictetus, that it is sometimes good not to be over-virtuous: it shows, that in proportion as our distresses increase, the munificence of the Crown increases also; in proportion as our clothes are rent, the royal mantle is extended over us."

The remaining subject of difference between the ministry and the "Patriots" in that Session, was upon the police bill, which had been for a considerable time a favourite object with Government to carry, in order to strengthen their interest in the city of Dublin, which, from the days of Dr. Lucas, they had felt declining. It was conceived by the opposition, that if the bill were carried for the City of Dublin, it would in the next Session be extended to every part of the kingdom: and it was also generally considered, that the report of popular risings and Popish conspiracies against the Protestant Ascendancy, had been industriously exaggerated for the purpose of intimidating the Parliament into the adoption of that strong measure\* of Government.

\* Sir Edward Crofton, in opposing this bill, said :—" I have spoken of Mr. O'Connor in a former debate; and I am firmly persuaded that, as to that gentleman, matters have been extremely exaggerated and misrepresented. I know it has been mentioned as an affair that required the interference of Government; and that camps, cannon, and fortifications, were erected. It was also rumoured, that the Roman Catholics were in open rebellion; this was an insidious, infamous, and false report, calculated to cast an unde-

Mr. Conolly took a leading part in opposing the Police Bill, which he observed, under the specious pretence of giving police, went to take away constitution. He was still positive, that he was well-founded in his opinion; that the conduct of the administration was inimical to the constitution. The temperance of the Volunteers since the noble Duke's administration, deserved their grateful approbation. When they were misguided, and adopted measures, which he conceived improper, he was not backward in avowing himself against their proceedings; but when he reflected, that the moment the Volunteers were told their conduct was disagreeable to Parliament, they retired to the country without a murmur, such conduct secured his admiration, and made him tenacious of their liberties; nor could their arms be placed in better hands than where they were.

There were several heated debates upon this bill: it was treated by opposition as a most unconstitutional job, a mere bill of patronage for ministerial purposes; although it must be allowed, that the Secretary offered to alter whatever should be found objectionable in the committee, and some of the noxious clauses were withdrawn. Several petitions were presented against the bill, but received with ill grace. Amongst other petitions, one was presented from the freeholders of the county of Dublin, by Sir Edward Newenham, which the Attorney-General moved to have rejected, as an insult to the House; and it was rejected by 118 against Sir Edward Newenham and Colonel Sharman. The Attorney-General boasted of his indulgence in not moving a censure against the petitioners; but should not again be so gentle, if the offence were repeated. This was the most important bill passed during the Session. It was the origin and nucleus of that immense standing

served reflection on a body of men remarkable for their loyalty to their sovereign, and their known attachment to the constitution; it was an illiberal and an infamous attack on a people distinguished for their peaceable demeanour, and was intended but to serve the purposes of this still more infamous bill.

"However great my knowledge may have been of the loyalty of the Roman Catholics of this country, yet I must confess, on this occasion, I was made a dupe to report; for from the gentleman, who had declared the country of Roscommon to be in a state of rebellion, I could scarcely believe but Government had authority for saying so; I confess, therefore, I felt for my property: and it was natural I should make every possible inquiry; I did so, and found there was no rebellion in the country; and also found the trifling disturbances, which had been so exaggerated, were only the effects of some whiskey, to which the country people had been treated, and which every gentleman knows operates on the lower order of people, as oil of rhodium does on rats; and what was very extraordinary, there was not a broken head on the occasion."

army of police and constabulary which is absolutely under the control of the British Government, and has since proved the most efficient part of the garrison by which that Government holds military occupation of Ireland.

Government succeeded, during the Session, in all the measures it insisted upon: so that on proroguing Parliament on the 18th of May, the Viceroy was able gravely to pay them the usual compliment upon the salutary laws enacted in that Session, and particularly the introduction of a system of police, as honourable proofs of their wisdom, moderation, and prudence. He moreover assured them, that his Majesty beheld with the highest satisfaction the zeal and loyalty of the people of Ireland: and that he had his Majesty's express commands, to assure them of the most cordial returns of his royal favour and parental affection.

It is painful to be obliged to admit that at this period (1787) five years of nominal independence had actually reduced Ireland to a condition of more helpless prostration at the feet of England than she had been before: that the policy of resuming one by one the liberties yielded for a moment to the demand of the Volunteers was either in operation or in preparation. Under Mr. Pitt's proposed commercial arrangements, Free Trade would no longer exist. The repeal of the perpetual Mutiny Bill would very soon matter little, when Government would have a standing army of police to overawe the "Lucasians" and reformers of Dublin; and which was certain to be established also in the provinces. The power of the Parliament was now unlimited as to originating its own laws; but for this very reason it had to be taken possession of in advance by the actual purchase of a commanding majority for the Crown; so that the independent Parliament should still be, as described by Swift, always firm in its vocation, for the Court against the Nation. Indeed the melancholy necessity of keeping in pay a majority of Parliament is deduced by Lord Clare from the very fact of that Parliament's political independence. The Government was now, he said, at the mercy of that Parliament, and therefore had to propitiate it, or Government could not go on. His argument concludes in favour of a "union" with England, as a cure for all evils. "Such a connection" [as the present], said he, "is formed not for mutual strength and security, but for mutual debility. "It is a connection of distinct minds and distinct interests, generating national discontent and jealousy, and perpetuating faction and misgovernment in the inferior country. The first obvious disadvantage to Ireland is, that in every department of the State, every other consideration must yield to Parliamentary power; let the misconduct of any public officer be what



it may, if he is supported by a powerful Parliamentary interest, he is too strong for the King's representative. A majority of the Parliament of Great Britain will defeat the minister of the day; but a majority of the Parliament of Ireland against the King's Government, goes directly to separate this kingdom from the British Crown. If it continues, separation or war is the inevitable issue; and therefore it is, that the general executive of the empire, as far as is essential to retain Ireland as a member of it, is completely at the mercy of the Irish Parliament; and it is vain to expect, so long as man continues to be a creature of passion and interest, that he will not avail himself of the critical and difficult situation, in which the executive Government of this kingdom must ever remain, under its present constitution, *to demand the favours of the Crown, not as the reward of loyalty and service, but as the stipulated price, to be paid in advance, for the discharge of a public duty.* Every unprincipled and noisy adventurer, who can achieve the means of putting himself forward, commences his political career on an avowed speculation of profit and loss: and if he fail to negotiate his political job, will endeavour to extort it by faction and sedition, and with unblushing effrontery to fasten his own corruption on the King's Ministers.—English influence is the inexhaustible theme for popular irritation and distrust of every factious and discontented man, who fails in the struggle to make himself the necessary instrument of it. Am I then justified in stating, that our present connection with Great Britain, is in its nature formed for mutual debility; that it must continue to generate national discontent and jealousy, and perpetuate faction and misgovernment in Ireland.”\*

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\* This famous speech is only cited in this place to show how very coolly a Lord Chancellor of Ireland could explain and avow the existence, the necessity and the whole mechanism of the corrupt management of the Irish Parliament. As an argument for a union, his speech may have its value, but it is much better as an argument for total separation. Those who thought, with his Lordship that England must *somehow* rule over Ireland naturally became unionists: those who thought that Ireland should rule herself, and that if all her people formed one united nation she could both govern and protect herself, became still more logically *united Irishmen*.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

1787—1789.

WHEN Parliament met, according to the last adjournment on the 18th of January, 1787, the Lord Lieutenant particularly applied to them for their assistance in the effectual vindication of the laws, and the protection of society. On this part of his address Mr. Conolly made some very severe observations; distinctly, indeed, charging the Government with having invented, or at least grossly exaggerated, the rumours of disturbances at the south, "to intimidate the Protestants of that kingdom, and to furnish an immediate pretext for the unconstitutional police bill:"—and "that the first thing that could be called a disturbance induced him to think Government had a hand in it." This involves a charge against the Government so atrocious and revolting—caluminating the forlorn and friendless Catholics of Munster to produce an alarm of threatened insurrection and thus be the more readily armed with a great police force, that it would be difficult to believe it, if we did not know, from subsequent events, that this kind of procedure is familiar to the British Government in Ireland, and forms one of its chief agencies. There were several statements and counter-statements as to the existence and extent of these alleged riots. Mr. Curran who then, and always, took the part of the oppressed, said:—  
—"Is it any wonder, that the wretches whom woful and long experience has taught to doubt, and with justice to doubt, the attention and relief of the Legislature, wretches that have the utmost difficulty to keep life and soul together, and who must inevitably perish, if the hand of assistance were not stretched out to them, should appear in tumult? No, sir, it is not. Unbound to the Sovereign by any proof of his affection, unbound to Government by any instance of its protection, unbound to the country, or to the soil, by being destitute of any property in it, 'tis no wonder that the peasantry should be ripe for rebellion and revolt: so far from matter of surprise, it must naturally have been expected.

"The supineness of the magistrates, and the low state of the commissions of the peace throughout the kingdom, but particularly in the county of Cork, should be rectified. A system of vile jobbing was one of the misfortunes of that country: it extended even to commissions of the peace: how else could the report of the four and twenty commissions of the peace, sent down to the county of Clare in one post, be accounted for? Even the

appointment of sheriffs was notoriously in the hands of Government: and through jobbing, sheriffs themselves could not be trusted: two sheriffs ran away last year with executions in their pockets, and the late high sheriff of the county of Dublin had absconded."

There was indeed local disturbances, as in the first days of Whiteboyism, provoked solely by the tithe-devouring clergymen and by the intolerable oppression of the landlords; but in no way partaking of an insurrectionary organization, nor directed to revolutionary ends. Mr. Fitzgibbon, then Attorney-General, told Parliament some marvellous tales. He blamed the landlords as the chief cause of the disturbances; and said, "he knew, that the unhappy tenantry were ground to powder by relentless landlords. He knew that, far from being able to give the clergy their just dues, they had not food or raiment for themselves; the landlord grasped the whole, and sorry was he to add, that not satisfied with the present extortion, some landlords had been so base as to instigate the insurgents to rob the clergy of their tithes, not in order to alleviate the distresses of the tenantry, but that they might add the clergy's share to the cruel rack-rents already paid. It would require the utmost ability of Parliament to come to the root of those evils." He closed by moving a resolution—"That it is the opinion of this committee, that some further provisions by Statute are indispensably necessary to prevent tumultuous risings and assemblies, and for the more adequate and effectual punishment of persons guilty of outrage, riot and illegal combination, and of administering and taking unlawful oaths."

A bill for these purposes was soon after brought in by Fitzgibbon, and after sharp debates, and a vigorous opposition from Mr. Conolly and others; was read a second time, committed by a very large majority, and passed.

Mr. Grattan who, while he desired to see the laws enforced, was yet very sensible of the unendurable oppressions practised on the peasantry, brought up on the 13th of March the whole subject of tithes, which he considered a disgrace to the Protestant Church, as well as a grievous burden to the Catholic people. He moved the following resolution:—"That if it appear, at the commencement of the next Session of Parliament, that public tranquillity has been restored in those parts of the kingdom that have lately been disturbed, and due obedience paid to the laws, this House will take into consideration the subject of tithes, and endeavour to form some plan for the honourable support of the clergy, and the ease of the people."



Mr. Secretary Orde differed from Mr. Grattan, and insisted, that in the existing circumstances of the country it was impossible in any degree to hold out an expectation, that the House would even enter upon the subject. Hereupon arose a warm debate ; and there were not wanting honourable members to affirm that the Established Church was no burden on the people, and that rectors and vicars rather saved money to a Catholic parish than otherwise. It may be conceived how Grattan's gall rose when he heard such arguments as these. "It has been said," he exclaimed, that the exoneration of potatoes from tithe would be of no advantage to the poor. Where had gentlemen learned that doctrine ? Certainly not in the report of Lord Carhampton. Or would they say, that taking sixteen shillings an acre off potatoes is no benefit to the miserable man who depends on them as his only food ?"

Mr. Grattan persisted with the motion for a committee to inquire whether any just cause of complaint existed among the people of Munster, or of Kilkenny, or Carlow on account of tithe, or the collection of tithe. His speech upon this occasion is considered as one of his master-pieces, both of reason and eloquence. It produced a great effect upon the country ; none whatever upon the House. Only forty-nine voted for Grattan's motion ; but 121 gave their voice against all inquiry. The poor peasantry were left at the mercy, as before, of the tithe-priests and proctors, and of the grinding landlords ; and so remain, without improvement to this day. They felt that there was no Parliament for them, no law, no protection, no sympathy ; and we cannot but agree with Mr. Curran that the only wonder would have been if they did *not* occasionally set fire to a parson's stack-yard, or that they did not cut off a tithe-proctor's ears when they met him in a convenient place.

The Duke of Rutland died in October, 1787 : died, it is said, in consequence of his excesses and debauchery. He was a good-natured and jovial nobleman, and more than sustained the hospitable character of Dublin Castle. As for public business, he committed all that to the management of those around him, experienced intriguers who knew better than he how "to do the King's business." And as there was but one machinery known which was capable of making public business move in Ireland ; and as the Viceroy's advisers felt it their duty to be liberal at the nation's expense, the cost of Government rapidly increased during his Viceroyalty. In the very year of his death, for example, the pension list was increased by additional grants to the amount of £8,730 over what it had been the year before. The Duke of

Rutland was succeeded by the Marquis of Buckingham, who met the Parliament for the first time on the 17th of January, 1788. In the address of the Commons in reply to his speech, Mr. Parsons objected to one clause, which gave unqualified approbation to the public course of the late Viceroy, and seemed therefore to bind the House to pursue the same measures. He remarked on the largely increased expenses and the enormous pension list, and remarked that neither in the speech from the throne, nor in the address, was the word *economy* to be found. He moved an amendment, but, of course, it was negatived without a division. It may be said, in general, of the administration of the Marquis of Buckingham, that it was conducted on the same principle (or negation of principle) and by the same unprincipled men as that of the Duke of Rutland. It was thought advisable to purchase a few "Patriots." What communications the Marquis made to his converts cannot now be stated with commercial exactitude; but he certainly inaugurated his term of office by persuading to silence some noisy members of the opposition. On this occasion it is agreeable to record an honourable trait of one of those "Patriots" whose memory is dearly cherished in Ireland, John Philpot Curran. Amongst other proselytes, that went over to the new Viceroy, was Mr. Longfield, who had considerable Parliamentary interest; he and the friends he introduced had uniformly opposed the late administration: amongst these was Mr. Curran, who having been brought into Parliament by Mr. Longfield, could not bend his principles to the pliancy of his friend, or take a subordinate part in supporting an administration, whose intended measures were made a secret: he therefore purchased a seat in a vacant borough, and offered it to Mr. Longfield for any person whose principles were at his command. Thus did Mr. Curran retain his seat and Parliamentary independence: and Mr. Longfield was enabled to fulfil his engagements with the minister, for his own and his dependant's votes in Parliament.

Early in this first Session, Mr. Forbes made another effort against the pension list, which had become his special subject. He had been taunted on a former occasion with making his attacks too general, instead of denouncing particular examples; and a sporting member of the Castle party had assured him that the man "who fires at a whole covey does not hit a feather." He now desired, that a list of the pensions granted since the last Session of Parliament might be read. He then objected to a pension of £1,000, to James Brown, Esq., late prime sergeant, on the principle only of its being granted to a Member of the House during pleasure. He remarked, that by the English act for further

securing the liberties of the subject, it was provided, that after the accession of the present family to the throne, no pensioner during pleasure, should sit or vote in the House of Commons. The people of Ireland had a right to participate with the inhabitants of Great Britain, in all the benefits and privileges of that act, and the Bill of Rights. He moved, "that this pension was a misapplication of the revenue." He also on the same day mentioned the pension of £640 to Thomas Higinbotham for life, adding, that he was astonished that so large a portion of the public money should be disposed of without the knowledge or privity of the Chancellor of the Exchequer; and that for such a transaction all the servants of the Crown should deny any responsibility; he then objected to a pension of £1,200 per annum to Robert Ashwood, for the life of his son, and also two other pensions of £300 each, and one of £200 to the same person, for lives of his other children. He stated, that a pension of £2,000 per annum had been granted in the year 1755, for the life of Frederick Robinson; that the family of Robinson had lately sold that pension to Mr. Ashworth, and had influence with Government sufficient to prevail on the minister to change the life in the grant, and to insert the lives of the young children of Mr. Ashworth in the place of Mr. Robinson; that this management was now become a frequent practice; and that thereby a grant of a pension for life operated as a lease for lives with a covenant of perpetual renewal.

He then moved that the above pension "was an improvident disposition of the revenue." It is almost needless to add that all Mr. Forbes's motions were negatived without a division. Nothing, perhaps, can better illustrate the shameless character of the universal venality than the timid objection made by a ministerial member against the *necessity* of doubling pensions to Members of Parliament. Sir Henry Cavendish, though he declared his unqualified devotion to that administration, yet remarked, that doubling the pensions of members might be avoided, "for," said he, "suppose it appears that £400 a-year are annexed to the name of a Member of this House, and that no particular cause could be assigned for the grant, may it not be conjectured, that it was made for his service in that House, and if so, an additional pension is unnecessary, for he that has £400 a-year for his vote, will not refuse voting though he were to be refused £400 a-year more."—(Par. Debates, vol. viii.) In truth it would be irksome and unprofitable to record these many unavailing efforts of the "Patriots" to restrain the progress of public corruption, but that the revelations made on such occasions exhibit the whole



machinery by which Irish Government was carried on, or could have been carried on for a single week : and show that British rule in that country consisted simply in making the Irish people pay large salaries to certain men for representing and betraying them.

It is just, however, to the honest Irishmen in that corrupt assembly to signalize and remember their useless but heroic efforts against the deluge of corruption.

The most violent attack upon the minister, during this Session of Parliament, was made on the 29th of February, when Mr. Forbes moved his address to the Crown, in order, at least, to leave to posterity, on the face of their journals, the grievances under which the people laboured in the year 1788. He prefaced his motion by a very interesting speech founded on facts, to be collected from the journals of the House, or from authentic documents then lying on the table. He travelled over much of his former arguments against the prodigality of the late administration, which had increased the pension list by £26,000. He took that opportunity of giving notice, that he meant next Session to offer a bill to that House for the purpose of creating a responsibility in the ministers of Ireland, for the application of the revenue of that kingdom. The only authority under which the vice-treasurer then paid any money, was a king's letter, countersigned by the commissioners of the English treasury. He adverted with marked censure, to the addition of £2,000 to the salary of the Secretary in the late administration, and to the large sums expended in the purchase and embellishment of his house in the Phoenix Park, and to the present intent of granting a pension of £2,000 to that very Secretary for life : which was establishing a most mischievous precedent for such grants to every future secretary. He was sorry to hear the ostensible minister avail himself of the same argument which his predecessors had successfully used for the last ten years in resisting every attack upon the pension list. He then enlarged upon the pernicious consequences of placing implicit confidence in the administration ; and supported his thesis by the following historical illustrations :—

From the year 1773 to 1776, confidence in the administration of that day had cost this nation £100,000 in new taxes, and £440,000 raised by life annuities. In 1778, confidence in the administration cost £300,000 in life annuities ; a sum granted for the purpose of defence, and which produced on an alarm of invasion, one troop of horse, and half a company of invalids. In 1779 the then secretary, for the purpose of opposing a measure for relief against the abuses of the pension list, read in this House

an extract of a letter from the Secretary of State in England, expressive of the determination of the then English ministry, not to increase the pension list ; confidence was placed in the administration of the day, and it cost the country £13,000 in new pensions, granted by the same secretary. In April, 1782, on the arrival of the principal of the new administration, confidence, in the first instance, was neither asked nor granted ; certain measures were proposed by the Commons and the people, they were granted, and the country was emancipated. In 1785, confidence in the administration of that day, cost Ireland £140,000 new taxes to equalize the income and expenditure ; but the grant produced £180,000 excess of expenses. The same confidence cost £20,000 per annum for a police establishment, which it had been proved at their bar contributed to the violation, instead of the preservation of the peace of the metropolis.

The same confidence, he said, cost this nation last year £100,000, charged for buildings and gardens in the Phoenix Park : in fine they might place nearly two-thirds of the national debt to the account of confidence in the administration of the day. He then moved an address to his Majesty setting forth the entire abuse of the pension system : that on the 1st of January, 1788, the list of pensions had increased to £96,289 per annum, *exclusive of military pensions, and charges under the head of incidents on the civil establishment, and additional salaries to sinecure officers*—both of which were substantially pensions ; and that this made an amount much greater than the pension list of England. It was in vain : the bribed majority listened to Mr. Forbes with a complacent smile ; and again his motion fell without a division.

After another attempt of Mr. Grattan to get a committee on tithes, Parliament was prorogued unexpectedly on the 14th of April, to the surprise and irritation of the people. The natural quickness of their sensations was accelerated by disappointment, when they found, that all that was done relative to tithes was, to provide for the clergy what some of them had lost by retention of the tithes in the two preceding years, and to secure to them for ever a tithe of hemp of 5s. per acre. The failure in every popular attempt of the “Patriots,” went but a little way to soothe the ruffled minds of the distressed peasantry in the provinces, or of the middling and higher orders in the metropolis and larger towns. Notwithstanding the increase of peace officers under the police bill, it was sarcastically observed, that his Excellency had the peace and tranquillity of the country deeply at heart, for that, upon the slightest appearance of interruption, he was sure to call in the aid of the military.

The attention of the public began at this moment to be turned away from the futile Parliamentary contests to scenes which were taking place in the northern county of Armagh. The Catholics, once almost extirpated from that and some neighbouring counties, had again increased and multiplied there. This had been caused in a great measure by the large emigration of Protestants to America, leaving extensive regions nearly dispeopled. Many Catholics with their families, who had been starving on the bare mountains of Connaught and Donegal began to venture back to the pleasant valleys where their fathers had dwelt, and offered to become tenants to deserted farms. Landlords accepted these tenants, for want of Protestants, and they were followed by others. Protestant farmers were thus exposed to competition, to the manifest injury of the Protestant interest; and much ill-feeling, and some violent collisions had been the consequence. At length, in 1784, the Protestants formed themselves in Armagh County, into a secret association calling itself Peep-of-Day Boys, in allusion to their custom of repairing at that hour to the houses of the Catholics, dragging them out of bed and otherwise maltreating them. Even the furious Protestant partisan, Sir Richard Musgrave, gives this account of the banditti in question:—"They visited the houses of their *antagonists* at a very early hour in the morning to search for arms; and it is most certain that in doing so they often committed the most wanton outrages—insulting their persons and breaking their furniture," &c. Of course human nature could not endure this treatment, and the Catholics of Armagh formed a counter-association, which they called by a name quite as descriptive as the other, "The Defenders." Many encounters soon took place, and sometimes in considerable numbers: but as the Catholics were then greatly a minority of the population of the county, were very poor, and could scarcely procure any arms—which, besides, it was against the law for them to possess—it is not wonderful if the advantage rested generally, though not always, with the Protestant aggressors.

Either for the purpose or under the pretence of checking the spirit of turbulence and outrage, in the year recourse again was had to the raising of some Volunteer corps, by way of strengthening, as it was said, the arm of the civil magistrate. It was not in the nature of things that these Volunteer corps, into which they refused to admit any Catholic, should not be more obnoxious to the Defenders, than to the Peep-of-Day Boys: for although they should not have shown favour or affection to any description of men disturbing the public tranquillity, yet it was the first part of their duty to disarm the Defenders (being Papists), and in their arms



had they for some time found their only safety and defence against their antagonists. Some occasional conflicts happened both between the Defenders and Peep-of-Day Boys, and between the Defenders and the Volunteers. As a corps of Volunteers in going to church at Armagh passed by a Catholic chapel, a quarrel arose with some of the congregation, and stones were thrown at the Volunteers. After service, instead of avoiding the repetition of insult by taking another route, the Volunteers procured arms, returned to the spot, and a conflict ensued, in which they killed some of the Catholic congregation. In consequence of these rencounters, and the Defenders procuring and retaining what fire-arms they could, the Earl of Charlemont, governor of the county, and the grand jury, published a manifesto against all Papists who should assemble in arms, and also against any person who should attempt to disarm them without legal authority. In addition to these efforts, some of the Peep-of-Day Boys sought also to disarm their antagonists by means of the law : they accordingly indicted some of the Defenders at the summer assizes of 1788 ; but Baron Hamilton quashed the indictments, and dismissed both parties with an impressive exhortation to live in peace and brotherly love. The Defenders about this time were charged with openly sending challenges both to the Peep-of-Day Boys and the Volunteers to meet them in the field ; the fact was, that the Defenders certainly did look upon them both as one common enemy combined to defeat and oppress them : whilst, therefore, this open hostility between the two parties subsisted and rankled under the daily festering sore of religious acrimony, the Defenders, who knew themselves armed against law, though in self-defence against the Peep-of-Day Boys, became the more anxious to bring their antagonists to an open trial of strength, rather than remain victims to the repeated outrages of their domiciliary visits, or other attempts to disarm them. Thus a private squabble between peasants gradually swelled into a village brawl, and ended in the religious war of a whole district.

These Protestant Peep-of-Day Boys were called also "Protestant Boys," and in some districts "Wreckers." The association of these plundering banditti afterwards developed itself into the too-famous organization of "Orangemen," which in our own day has counted among its accomplices an uncle of Queen Victoria, has made riots in Canada, and has wrecked Catholic churches and burned convents in the United States.

King George the Third, who never had much mind, this year lost the little he had, and was pronounced insane by the court physicians. Then at once arose the question of the regency.

The Prince of Wales was then twenty-six years of age ; and was associated politically and socially with Whigs ; an association by no means creditable to them. But though not creditable, it might be useful to his friends, if he were now to be recognized regent, with full powers of royalty. On the other hand Mr. Pitt and the Tories saw constitutional objections. Mr. Fox opposed the motion of Mr. Pitt for an examination of constitutional precedents, inasmuch as the minister knew there were no precedents applicable to the case ; and contended that the heir apparent, being of full age, could and ought to exercise all the functions of royalty by his own inherent right : Mr. Pitt replied that during the sovereign's natural life, the heir apparent was no more entitled to the regency than any other subject in the kingdom ; and that it was " little less than treason " to affirm the contrary. Mr. Burke supported the Whig view of the subject ; that is, maintained the right of the Prince to regency with full powers. The administration, however, was quite sure of a majority in both Houses ; and this availed more than all the constitutional arguments in the world.

The whole question could have but little interest for the Irish nation ; because whoever should be king or regent in England, the course of British government in this country would have continued precisely the same, so far as any real interest of the people was concerned : but there were unhappily Whigs and Tories in Ireland also ; and on this occasion, as ever since, the Irish parties attached themselves to their respective party connections in England. It was known also that the powerful interests of the houses of Leinster, Shannon, and Tyrone, the Fitzgeralds, Boyles, and Beresfords were Whigs ; being, not unnaturally, attached to the party which had supported in England the claim of Ireland to legislative independence. Some Statesmen, therefore, very soon saw the probability of a collision between the two Parliaments upon the regency. Indiscreet anticipations of such a difference had already been expressed in debate. Lord Loughborough, for example, who took the lead of opposition in the Peers, amongst other arguments in support of the Prince's inherent right, strongly urged the inconveniency and mischief, which might arise from the contrary doctrine, when it should come to be acted upon by the independent kingdom of Ireland. Was it remembered, said his lordship, that a neighbouring kingdom stood connected with us, and acknowledged allegiance to the British Crown. If once the rule of regular succession were departed from by the two Houses, how were they sure, that the neighbouring kingdom would acknowledge the regent, whom the

two Houses would take upon themselves to elect. The probability was, that the neighbouring kingdom would depart, in consequence of our departure, from the rule of hereditary succession, and choose a regent of their own, which must lead to endless confusion and embarrassment.

But in answer to this part of Lord Loughborough's speech, Lord Chancellor Thurlow lamented, that any remarks should have fallen from the noble and learned lord respecting Ireland, because he considered them as not unlikely, *Spargere voces in vulgum ambiguas!* Such vague and loose suggestions could answer no useful purpose, but might produce very mischievous consequences. He declared, that he had every reliance on the known loyalty, good sense, and affection of that country, and felt no anxiety on the danger of Ireland's acting improperly.

In fact, after long and violent debates in the English Lords and Commons, Mr. Pitt's measure of a limited regency was carried in England. The limitations were indeed very great: as the regent's power was not to extend to "the granting of any office in reversion, or to granting for any other term than during his Majesty's pleasure, any pension or any office whatever, except such as must by law be granted for life, or during good behaviour; nor to the granting of any rank or dignity of the peerage." While the debates in England were pending, peremptory instructions were received by the Viceroy, Lord Buckingham, to procure (with "unlimited discretion" as to the means)\* from the Irish Parliament a formal recognition, that whomsoever Great Britain should appoint as regent, should, *ipso facto*, be received in Ireland with all the restrictions and limitations imposed upon the regent in Great Britain; with peremptory orders to convene the Parliament the instant his Excellency could answer for a majority for carrying such recognition. Unusual exertions to gain over the Members to that point were used by all the means, which the Castle influence, aided at that time by the British Treasury, could command. Threats also were circulated, and generally credited (not rashly, as experience afterwards proved) that whoever possessing place or pension, should vote against the minister, would forfeit, or be deprived. Yet it was soon apparent that the canvass of the Castle would fail of success on this important and perilous occasion. The Marquis of Bucking-

\* This statement concerning "unlimited discretion" is made on the authority of Mr. Plowden, a very careful and conscientious inquirer. Besides, if the fact had never been affirmed, it would be in itself too probable to admit of much doubt.



ham had grown extremely unpopular amongst the leaders of Irish politics; and it was universally believed that his Government was going to be of very short duration. In short it was previously known, that Government would be left in a minority on the question: they therefore deferred the evil day as long as possible, and convened the Parliament only on the 5th of February, after the whole plan had been settled, and submitted to by the Prince in England. On an emergency so pressing, the Lord Lieutenant, who at no time had been popular, now found himself importuned and harassed beyond bearing: the death of Sir William Montgomery and Lord Clifden, who held lucrative places under Government, brought upon him a greedy swarm of applicants who imposed their extortionate demands with an arrogance in proportion to the value now known to be set upon a single vote at the Castle. The truth seems to be that this Lord Lieutenant, with all his "unlimited discretion" had not places and pensions, and money, sufficient to insure the needful majorities. If the Castle majority deserted the Viceroy, then, it was not on account of any fault on his part, but rather on account of his one virtue—which they could never forgive—economy of the public money. In a debate which arose in the House, while this regency question was still awaiting decision, and in which the administration of the Marquis of Buckingham was made the subject of severe comment, Mr. Corry admitted a large increase of salary in his appointment (surveyor of the ordnance), but could at the same time show some savings to the public in his department, which would fully justify whatever alteration had been made: the intention of the alteration was to place the management in the hands of men, who might be supposed above the little arts of plunder and speculation, which had before disgraced the department much to the public loss. He had ever opposed the extension of pensions, and opposition to that practice was one of the conditions on which he had accepted of office: but he could not see that the Marquis of Buckingham deserved censure because a bill to limit pensions had been opposed in his administration. The majority of the House stood pledged to oppose the bill: but the Marquis *had not added a pension to the list*. This was not indeed altogether correct; as he had agreed to a pension of £2000 in favour of Mr. Orde, of the "Commercial Propositions." Mr. Grattan, in the same debate, said, "The expenses of the Marquis of Buckingham were accompanied with the most extraordinary professions of economy, and censures on the conduct of the administration that immediately preceded him; he had exclaimed against the pensions of the Duke of

Rutland, a man accessible undoubtedly to applications, but the most disinterested man on earth, and one whose noble nature demanded some, but received no indulgence from the rigid principles or professions of the Marquis of Buckingham. He exclaimed against his pensions, and he confirmed them : he resisted motions made to disallow some of them ; and he finally agreed to a pension for Mr. Orde, the secretary of the Duke of Portland's administration, whose extravagance was at once the object of his invective and his bounty : he resisted his pension, if report says true ; and having shown that it was against his conscience, he submitted. Mr. Orde can never forgive the Marquis the charges made against the man he thought proper to reward : the public will never forgive the pension given to a man the Marquis thought proper to condemn." What was even worse than this, and what the Castle Statesmen of that day could still less forgive, it appears, from the same speech of Mr. Grattan, that " while the Marquis of Buckingham was professing a disinterested regard for the prosperity of Ireland, he disposed of the best reversion in Ireland *to his own family* ; the only family in the world that could not with decency receive it, as he was the only man in the world who could not with decency dispose of it to them."

After this it will not appear wonderful that the high and mighty aristocratic houses of Ireland, with all their train and influence, abandoned the Castle in this important crisis. Mr. Grattan, of course, and most of the " Patriot" minority, would have voted with the English Whigs at any rate. It is just to admit that many of the Irish Whigs would have done the same, independently of all considerations of interest and patronage ; but when to these powerful parties was added the crowd of political merchants and vote-sellers who could not hope to be paid, or to be paid enough, it is not strange that the " King's business" was not efficiently done.

The 11th of February, 1789, was the great day of contest upon the Regency of Ireland ; Mr. Grattan and Mr. Fitzgibbon took the lead on the opposite sides ; the House being in committee on the state of the nation, after some preliminary conversation, in which the plan of the Castle was candidly avowed by Mr. Fitzherbert, Mr. Grattan said, that the right honourable gentleman had stated the plan of the Castle to be limitation and a bill. He proposed to name for the regency of that realm, His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales ; in that they perfectly agreed, and only followed the most decided wishes of the people of Ireland ; they were clear, and had been so from the first, that His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales ought, and must be the regent ; but

they were also clear, that he should be invested with the full regal power ; plenitude of royal power. The limitations, which a certain member proposed to impose, were suggested with a view to preserve a servile imitation of the proceedings of another country, not in the choice of a regent, which was a common concern, but in the particular provisions and limitations which were not a common concern, but in the particular circumstances of the different countries. The bill, or instrument which he called a bill, was suggested on an opinion, that an Irish act of Parliament might pass without a king in a situation to give the royal assent, and without a regent appointed by the Irish Houses of Parliament to supply his place. The idea of limitation, he conceived to be an attack on the necessary power of Government ; the idea of his bill was an attack on the King of Ireland. They had heard the Castle dissenting from their suggestion. It remained for them to take the business out of their hands, and confide the custody of the great and important matter to men more constitutional and respectable. The Lords and Commons of Ireland, and not the Castle, should take the leading part in this great duty. The country gentlemen, who procured the constitution, should nominate the regent. He should submit to them the proceedings they intended in the discharge of that great and necessary duty. Mr. Grattan contended that the proper course was not a bill, but an address, citing the authority of the address to the Prince of Orange on the abdication of King James.

Mr. Conolly then rose and said, that on that melancholy occasion, which every gentleman in and out of office lamented, and none more sincerely than he did, it had fallen to the lot of the two Houses to put into the kingly office a substitute for their beloved sovereign ; and there seemed to be but one mind, which was to make that substitute the illustrious person who had, of all others, the greatest interest in preserving the prerogative of the Crown, and the constitution of the realm.

He entirely coincided in the plan Mr. Grattan had proposed, because he was convinced it was consonant to the constitution, and such as his royal highness, to whom he should then move an address, must necessarily approve. He hoped they would be unanimous on the occasion. He therefore moved the following resolution :—

“ *Resolved*, That it is the opinion of this committee, that a humble address be presented to his royal highness to take upon himself the government of this realm, during the continuation of his Majesty's present indisposition, and no longer, and under the



style and title of Prince Regent of Ireland, in the name of his Majesty to exercise and administer, according to the laws and constitution of this kingdom, all regal powers, jurisdiction, and prerogatives to the Crown and Government thereof belonging."

The motion was seconded by Mr. George Ponsonby.

Several of the former friends of the Castle supported the address, when Mr. Fitzgibbon (who was still Attorney-General, afterwards Earl of Clare) rose to oppose it. He made this question, as he made every question, an occasion to inculcate the idea of a legislative union, which was even then his great political aim, and continued to be so until he attained it.

He maintained, that the Crown of Ireland and the Crown of England were inseparably and indissolubly united ; and that the Irish Parliament was perfectly and totally independent of the British Parliament.

The first position was their security ; the second was their freedom ; and when gentlemen talked any other language than that, they either tended to the separation of the crowns, or to the subjugation of their Parliament ; they invaded either their security or their liberty ; in fact, the only security of their liberty was their connection with Great Britain, and gentlemen who risked breaking the connection, must make up their minds to a union. God forbid he should ever see that day ; but if ever the day on which a separation should be attempted, should come, he should not hesitate to embrace a union rather than a separation.

Under the Duke of Portland's government the grievances of Ireland were stated to be :

The alarming usurpation of the British Parliament ;

A perpetual mutiny bill ;

And the powers assumed by the Privy Council.

These grievances were redressed, and in redressing them they passed a law repealing part of Poynings'. By their new law they enacted, that all bills, which should pass the two Houses in Ireland, should be certified into England, and returned under the Great Seal of England, without any addition, diminution, or alteration whatsoever, should pass into law, and no other. By this they made the Great Seal of England essentially and indispensably necessary on the passing of laws in Ireland ; they could pass no act without first certifying it into England, and having it returned under the Great Seal in that kingdom, insomuch that were the King of England and Ireland to come in person, and to reside in Ireland, he could not pass a bill without its being first certified to his regent in England, who must return it under the

seal of that kingdom before his Majesty could even in person assent to it. That if the House should by force of an address, upon the instant, and without any communication with England, invest a regent with powers undefined, when the moment of reflection came, it would startle the boldest adventurers in England ; and then he reminded gentlemen of the language they held with England in the day they asserted their freedom : "Perpetual connection ; common fortune ; we will rise or fall with England ; we will share her liberty, and we will share her fate." Did gentlemen recollect the arguments used in England to justify the fourth proposition of the commercial treaty ? Ireland, said they, having a Parliament of her own, may think fit to carry on a commerce, and regulate her trade by laws different from, perhaps contradictory to, the laws of Great Britain. How well founded that observation was, they would prove, if they seized the first opportunity that offered of differing from Great Britain on a great imperial question ; certainly if it be the scheme to differ on all imperial questions, and if that be abetted by men of great authority, they meant to drive them to *a union*, and the method they took was certainly more effectual to sweep away opposition, than if all the sluices of corruption were opened together, and deluged the country's representatives ; for it was certain nothing less than the alternative of separation could ever force a union.

Suppose the Prince did not accept the regency in England ; suppose their address should reach him before he was actually invested with royal powers in England, in what situation would you put him ? They would call on him, in defiance of two acts of Parliament, which made the crowns inseparable, to dethrone the King his father. They would call upon him to do an act now, at which hereafter his nature would revolt. They were false friends of the Prince of Wales, who should advise him to receive an address that might give him cause to curse the hand which presented it. He knew that liberties indecent in the extreme had been taken with the name of that august personage. He knew it had been whispered, that every man who should vote against the address, would be considered as voting against him and treating him with disrespect ; but if any man had had the guilt and folly to poison his mind with such an insinuation, he trusted to his good sense to distinguish his friends ; he would trust to his good sense to determine, whether they were his friends who wished to guard the imperial rights of the British Crown, or they who would stake them upon the momentary and impotent triumph of an English party. What matter to the Prince, whether he received royal authority by bill or by address ?

Was there a man who would presume to libel him, and to assert, that the success of that measure would be a triumph to him?

There was a feature in the proceeding which, independent of every other objection to it, did in his mind make it highly reprehensible, and that was, that he considered it as a formal appeal from the Parliament of England to that of Ireland. Respecting the parties who made that appeal he should say nothing: but although there might be much dignity on their part in receiving the appeal, he could not see any strong symptoms of wisdom in it; because by so doing he should conceive we must inevitably sow the seeds of jealousy and disunion between the Parliaments of the two countries; and though he did not by any means desire of the Parliament of that country implicitly to follow the Parliament of England, he should suppose it rather a wise maxim for Ireland always to concur with the Parliament of Great Britain, unless for very strong reasons indeed they were obliged to differ from it. If it were to be a point of Irish dignity to differ with the Parliament of England to show their independence, he very much feared that sober men in that country, who had estates to lose, would soon become sick of independence. The fact was, that constituted as it was, the Government of that country never could go on, unless they followed Great Britain implicitly in all regulations of imperial policy. The independence of their Parliament was their freedom; their dependence on the Crown of England was their security for that freedom; and gentlemen, who professed themselves that night, advocates for the independence of the Irish Crown, were advocates for its separation from England.

They should agree with England in three points:—one king, one law, one religion. They should keep these great objects steadily in view, and act like wise men. If they made the Prince of Wales their Regent, and granted him the plenitude of power, in God's name let it be done by bill; otherwise he saw such danger, that he deprecated the measure proposed. He called upon the country gentlemen of Ireland; that that was not a time to think of every twopenny grievance, every paltry disappointment sustained at the Castle of Dublin; if any man had been aggrieved by the Viceroy, and chose to compose a philippic on the occasion, let him give it on the debate of a turnpike bill, where it would not be so disgraceful to the man who uttered it, and to those who would not listen to him, as it would be on the present occasion.

On the 17th the address was agreed upon by both Houses. Its principal clause was in these words:—

“We therefore beg leave humbly to request, that your Royal Highness will be pleased to take upon you the Government of this



realm during the continuation of his Majesty's present indisposition, and no longer; and under the style and title of Prince Regent of Ireland, in the name and on behalf his Majesty, to exercise and administer, according to the laws and constitution of this kingdom, all regal powers, jurisdiction, and prerogatives to the Crown and Government thereof belonging."

On the 19th both Houses waited on the Lord Lieutenant, requesting him to transmit it to the Prince. He refused to do so. On the day following Mr. Grattan moved in the House "that his excellency the Lord Lieutenant having thought proper to decline to transmit to his Royal Highness George, Prince of Wales, the address of both Houses of Parliament, a competent number of members be appointed by this House, to present the said address to his Royal Highness."

This was carried by a large majority; was sent up to the Lords, who concurred, and named the Duke of Leinster and the Earl of Charlemont to accompany the Members of the other House who should be appointed to join them in presenting the address.

Mr. Grattan then moved,—“that it be *Resolved*, That his excellency the Lord Lieutenant's answer to both Houses of Parliament, requesting him to transmit their address to his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, is ill advised, contains an unwarrantable and unconstitutional censure on the proceedings of both Houses of Parliament, and attempts to question the undoubted rights and privileges of the Lords spiritual and temporal and Commons of Ireland."

On the 25th of February, the committee of the two Houses of Parliament, having arrived in London, proceeded to Carlton House and presented the address. They were most graciously received: but two days before, the King had recovered from his malady. It was thus unnecessary for the Prince either to accept or reject the offer made to him by the Irish Parliament. He congratulated them on the happy change in his Majesty's health, and assured them of the "gratitude and affection to the loyal and generous people of Ireland which he felt indelibly imprinted on his heart." This dangerous dispute was thus ended for that time. Its dangers were twofold. First, the Prince might have refused the regency with limited powers—in that case the English Parliament would certainly have made the Queen regent: and the Prince might have accepted the Irish regency with unlimited powers: there would then have been two regents, and two *separate* kingdoms. Secondly, the Prince might have accepted the regency precisely on the terms offered him in each country: he would then have been a regent with limited powers in England, and with full royal prerogative

in Ireland; unable to create a peer in England, but with power to swamp the House with new peerages in Ireland; unable to reward his friends with certain grants, pensions, and offices in England, but able to quarter them all upon the revenue of Ireland. The peril of such a condition of things was fully appreciated both by Mr. Pitt, and by his able coadjutor in Ireland, Mr. Fitzgibbon. They drew from it an argument for the total annihilation of Ireland by a legislative union. Others who watched events with equal attention, found in it a still sounder argument for total separation.

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## CHAPTER XXIV.

1789.

IRELAND may possibly have had worse Viceroys than the Marquis of Buckingham; but scarcely one so intensely unpopular. He was parsimonious and extravagant—that is, he saved pennies, and squandered thousands of pounds; yet did not squander them on the right persons. He talked economy and practised the most reckless profusion, yet in an underhand, indirect manner which made him no friends, and many enemies. In manner he was extremely reserved, whether from pride or from a natural coldness of disposition. In short, he was in every way unsuited to the Irish temperament; for there had lately been formed gradually a marked Irish character, even amongst the Protestant colonists before the era of independence, and still more notably since that time. Gentlemen born in this country, and all whose interests and associations were here, no longer called themselves Englishmen born in Ireland, as Swift had done. The same powerful assimilating influence which had formerly made the Norman settlers, Geraldines and De Burghs “more Irish than the Irish” after two or three generations, had now also acted more or less upon the very Cromwellians and Williamites; and there was recognizable in the whole character and bearing even of the Protestants, a certain dash of that generosity, levity, impetuosity, and recklessness which have marked the Celtic race since the beginning. They were capable of the most outrageous depravity and of the highest honour and rectitude: of the most insolent, ostentatious venality and corruption, as well as of the noblest, proudest independence. The formation of this modern composite Irish character is of course attributable to the gradual amalgamation of the privileged Protestant colonists with the *converted* Irish, who had from time to time conformed to the Established Church, to save

their estates, or to possess themselves of the property of non-conforming neighbours. This was a large and increasing element in the Protestant colony ever since the time of Elizabeth ; and of such families came the Currans, Dalys, Doyles, Conollys, as well as the higher names O'Neill, O'Brien, Burke, Roche, Fitzpatrick. The ancestors of these families, in abandoning their Catholic faith, could not let out all their Celtic blood, and that blood permeated the whole mass of the population, and often broke out and showed its origin, even in men partly of English descent, or at least of English names. Grattan, for example, in the character of his intellect and temperament, was as purely Celtic as Curran himself. In truth it had become very difficult to determine the ethnological distinction between the inhabitants of this island ; and surnames had long ceased to be a safe guide ; because ever since the " Statutes of Kilkenny " in the 15th century, thousands of Irish families, especially of those residing near or in the English Pale had changed their names in obedience to those Statutes, that they might have the benefit of the English law in their dealings with the people of the Pale. They had assumed surnames, as prescribed by the Statute, either from some trade or calling, as Miller, Taylor, Smith,—or from some place, as Trim, Slane, Galway,—or from some colour, as Gray, Green, White, Brown. Gradually their original clan-names were lost ; and it soon became their interest to keep up no tradition even of their Irish descent. Of one of the families in this category, undoubtedly came Oliver Goldsmith, whose intensely Irish nature is a much surer guide to his origin than the trade surname of Goldsmith adopted under the Statute.

It has been said that surnames were no sure guide to origin ; but in one direction surnames were, and are, nearly infallible—a Celtic surname is a sure indication of Celtic blood, because nobody ever had any interest in assuming or retaining such a patronymic, all the interests and temptations being the other way. But an English surname is no indication at all of English descent, because for several centuries—first, under the Statutes of Kilkenny, afterwards under the more grievous pressure of the Penal Code, all possible worldly inducements were held out to Irishmen to take English names and forget their own.\*

\* It would be a curious study to trace the history of Irish family names. For the first three centuries after the Norman invasion under Henry II., the movement was quite in an opposite direction ; and De Burghs became Mac Williams, De Berminghams, Mac Feorais, the Fitzurses, Mac Mahons ; and Norman barons became chiefs of clans, forgot both French and English, rode without stirrups, and kept the upper lip unshaven.



From so large a mingling of the Celtic element even in the exclusive Protestant colony had resulted the very marked Irish character which was noticed, though not with complacency, by English writers of that period :—and to this character the cold, dry, and narrow Marquis of Buckingham was altogether abhorrent. During the agitation of the regency question, he had succeeded in creating two new offices of great emolument; one by the separation of the excise and revenue board, which provided a place for a Beresford: another by appointing an additional commissioner to the Stamp-office. “About this time also,” as Mr. Plowden says maliciously, “his excellency found it necessary to restore to the officers in barracks their wonted allowance of *firing*, which in a former fit of subaltern economy he had stopped from them. This pitiful stoppage had been laid on to the great discontent of the army, and being very ungraciously removed, the alleviation was received without gratitude.” Mr. Grattan, in a debate on this administration, says :—

“His great objection to the Marquis of Buckingham was, not merely that he had been a jobber, but a jobber in a mask! his objection was not merely, that his administration had been expensive, but that his expenses were accompanied with hypocrisy; it was the affectation of economy, attended with a great deal of good, comfortable, substantial jobbing for himself and his friends. That led to another measure of the Marquis of Buckingham, which was the least ceremonious, and the most sordid and scandalous act of self interest, attended with the sacrifice of all public decorum; he meant the disposal of the reversion of the place of the chief remembrancer to his brother, one of the best, if not the very best office in the kingdom, given in reversion to an absentee, with a great patronage and a compensation annexed. That most sordid and shameless act was committed exactly about the time when the kingdom was charged with great pensions for the bringing home, as it was termed, absentee employments. That bringing home absentee employments was a monstrous job; the kingdom paid the value of the employment, and perhaps more; she paid the value of the tax also. The pensioner so paid was then suffered to sell both to a resident, who was free from the tax; he was then permitted to substitute new and young lives in the place of his own, and then permitted to make a new account against the country, and to receive a further compensation, which he was suffered in the same manner to dispose of.”

It was undoubtedly, in part, owing to the excessive unpopularity of this Viceroy that the short remainder of his government was so little satisfactory to himself and his employers in London;

and that the "Patriots" were able to gain some trifling advantages; not indeed to such an extent as to accomplish a single reform or abate a single abuse, but at least to shake the regular venal Parliamentary majorities and alarm the Government. As the late gloomy prospect of a change in the Irish administration had driven many gentlemen to the opposition benches, Mr. Grattan was willing to avail himself of the earliest fruits of their conversion; accordingly, on the third of March, 1789, he offered to the House a resolution which he thought absolutely necessary, from a transaction which had lately taken place. He thought it necessary to call the attention of the House to certain principles, which the gentlemen, with whom he had generally the honour to coincide, considered as the indispensable condition, without which no government could expect their support, and which the present Government had resisted.

The first was a reform of the police; at present the institution could only be considered as a scheme of patronage to the Castle, and corruption to the city; a scheme which had failed to answer the end of preserving public peace, but had fully succeeded in extending the influence of the Castle.

Another principle much desired, was to restrain the abuse of pensions by a bill similar to that of Great Britain. That principle, he said, Lord Buckingham had resisted, and his resistance to it was one great cause of his opposing his Government. To this he would add another principle, the restraining revenue officers from voting at elections; this, he observed, was a principle of the British Parliament, and it was certainly more necessary in Ireland from what had lately taken place, where, by a certain union of family interests, counties had become boroughs, and those boroughs had become private property.

But the principle to which he begged to call the immediate attention of the House was, that of preventing the great offices of the State from being given to absentees; that was a principle admitted by all to be founded in national right, purchased by liberal compensation, and every departure from it must be considered as a slight to the nobility and gentry of Ireland, who certainly were better entitled to the places of honour and trust in their own country, than any absentee could possibly be; but besides the slight shown to the nobility and gentry of Ireland, by bestowing places of honour, of profit, and of trust on absentees, the draft of money from this country, the institution of deputies (a second establishment unnecessary, were the principals to reside), the double influence arising from this raised the abuse.

into an enormous grievance. Mr. Grattan concluded with a motion to condemn this last practice.

A very warm debate ensued, in which Mr. Corry and some other gentlemen admitted the principle of the resolution, although they opposed its passing, because it was a censure on the Marquis of Buckingham. To get rid of the question, an adjournment was moved and carried by a majority of 115 against 106. Thus early had the old majority began to fall into their former ranks. Still the superiority of votes bore no proportion to 200 and upwards, of which the former full majorities consisted. Mr. Grattan, accordingly, on the following day (4th of March) moved for leave to bring in *a bill for the better securing the freedom of election for Members to serve in Parliament, by disabling certain officers employed in the collection or management of his Majesty's revenue from giving their votes at such election.*

But none of the measures proposed by Mr. Grattan could be carried in that House. In fact the deserting members of the majority were soon whipped back into their ranks : for on the 14th of March the Lord Lieutenant made a speech to both Houses, officially informing them of the full recovery of the King. It was immediately apparent that Mr. Pitt was again supreme ; and it was even intimated very plainly that the Members of either House who had concurred in the address to the Prince, or who had voted for a censure on the conduct of the Marquis, should be made to repent of their votes.

The House having by this time been nearly marshalled into their former ranks, Mr. Grattan thought it useless to divide them on the second reading of the place bill, on the 30th of April ; it was negatived without a division. The only subject particularly interesting to the History of Ireland, which came before Parliament during the remainder of that Session, was the subject of tithes : Mr. Grattan having presented to the House, according to order, a bill to appoint commissioners for the purpose of inquiring into the state of tithes in the different provinces of that kingdom, and to report a plan for ascertaining the same : he followed up his motion with a very elaborate, instructive, and eloquent speech upon this important national object. The House adjourned from the 8th to the 25th of May, on which day the Lord Lieutenant prorogued the Parliament, and made a speech of a general nature, without a word of reference to any of the extraordinary circumstances of the Session.

The administration, alarmed by the late symptoms of disaffection, and by the renewed combination of the powerful aristocratic



houses, as exhibited in the proceedings on that regency question, now set itself deliberately to purchase back votes in detail, and again to check the Irish oligarchical influence. It has been already mentioned, in the account of Lord Townshend's administration, that he, at a very heavy expense to the nation, broke up an aristocracy which before his time had monopolized the whole power of the Commons and regularly bargained for terms with every new representative for managing the House of Commons. Mr. Fitzgibbon (and no man knew better) now admitted, *that this manoeuvre cost the nation upwards of half a million*: that is, that he had paid or granted so much to purchase that majority in Parliament, by which he governed to the end of his administration.

Mr. Grattan, some years afterwards, commenting on this declaration of Fitzgibbon's and the astonishing scene of corruption which followed it, broke out in this fierce language:—" *Half a million, or more was expended some years ago to break an opposition; the same, or a greater sum may be necessary now*: so said the principal servant of the Crown. The House heard him: I heard him: he said it standing on his legs to an astonished and an indignant nation; and he said it in the most extensive sense of bribery and corruption. The threat was proceeded on; the peerage was sold; the caitiffs of corruption were everywhere; in the lobby, in the street, on the steps, and at the door of every Parliamentary leader, whose thresholds were worn by the members of the then administration, offering titles to some, amnesty to others, and corruption to all."

Indeed no bounds were now set, either to the corruption or to the proscription. The Government kept no measures with its enemies, and had nothing to refuse to its friends. Mr. Fitzgibbon, the Attorney-General, and real Governor of the country, was a man as audacious, as resolute, and nearly as eloquent as Grattan himself. It is impossible to deny to the man, on this and on subsequent occasions, a certain tribute of admiration for his potent will and fiery manhood, and all the credit which may be supposed due to a bold, outspoken, insolent defiance and disdain of every sentiment of public conscience. Under his advice and superintendence, market-overt was held for votes and influence; prices of boroughs, and of parts of boroughs, of votes, titles, and peerages, were brought to a regular tariff. Not a peerage, not an honour, nor a place nor pension was disposed of but expressly for engagements of support in Parliament. And every little office or emolument that could be resumed by Government was granted upon a new bargain for future services. But this

was not enough : proscription of enemies was to go hand in hand with reward of service. It mattered not, that in response to the atrocious threat of punishing those who had opposed the Government, the famous "Round Robin" was signed by the leading Peers and most illustrious Commoners of Ireland, denouncing this attempt at intimidation and coercion. It was signed by the Duke of Leinster, the Archbishop of Tuam, and eighteen peers, as well as by Grattan, Conolly, Curran, the Ponsonby's, O'Neill, Charles Francis Sheridan, Langrishe, Ogle, Daly, and many others ; and declared that any such proscription was an attack on the independence of Parliament, and was in itself sufficient ground for relentless opposition against any Government. The bold Attorney-General was not to be intimidated by this—the Duke of Leinster himself, who held an office of high rank, was forthwith dismissed : Mr. Fitzherbert, Mr. George Ponsonby, the Earl of Shannon, and a dozen other high officials, who had supported the regency of the Prince of Wales were unceremoniously treated in like manner. At the same time the offices were given, or rather sold to others, for past or future service ; and Fitzgibbon himself, who had indeed earned, and who was yet to earn, all the favours which the British Government can heap on one man, was made Lord Chancellor. Good working majorities were now secure, and "the king's business" was to be done in future without fail and with a high hand.

It seems very strange now, that Mr. Grattan and his friends should not have perceived the utter failure and futility of their great and famous achievement of '82 for any practical purpose in checking the deadly domination of England. It is strange that he in particular, who had always avowed himself in favour of full emancipation to the Catholics, did not at last come to the conclusion that the only hope of the country lay, not in Parliament, but in preparation for armed resistance by a *united* nation. In short, the wonder is, that it was not Grattan himself who invented the association of *United Irishmen*. He, with his powerful political following could have given to that organization a consistency and a power such as it never possessed, and might have made of Ninety-eight a greater Eighty-two. But in fact he shunned all extra Parliamentary action, and denounced the United Irish to the last. He was so proud of the achievement of Eighty-two that he never could be brought to see its imperfection. Besides, there grows up in Members of Parliament, after some years' habit of working in that body, a kind of superstitious reverence for it ; an unwillingness to acknowledge any political vitality out of doors, and a morbid idea that the eyes of the Universe are upon that

House, or at least ought to be. Here he stood, after eight years of "independence," confronting an independent Parliament, of whom one hundred and four were bribed as placemen or pensioners, and about a hundred and twenty more owned by proprietors of boroughs, vainly fulminating his indignant protests against corruption—all his efforts to reform any abuse whatever, totally defeated—his Volunteers well got rid of, and succeeded by a militia under immediate control of the Crown and a police force in the metropolis to make sure that no popular demonstrations should ever again attempt to overawe that "Independent Parliament;" and yet he could not think of admitting the only rational conclusion—that the united people should be organized to take the government out of hands so incompetent or so vile.

But although the "Patriotic party" did not go the length of revolutionary projects, they felt the necessity of combining and organizing their Parliamentary forces. The "Round Robin" was the parent of the "Whig Club." The leaders of opposition had found it advisable, in order to consolidate their force into a common centre of union, to establish a new political society under the denomination of the Whig Club; an institution highly obnoxious to the Castle: they adopted the same principles, were clad in the same uniform of blue and buff, and professedly acted in concert with the Whig Club of England. At the head of this club were the Duke of Leinster, the Earl of Charlemont, Mr. Conolly, Mr. Grattan, Mr. Forbes, both the Messieurs Ponsonby, Mr. Curran, and a number of leading members of opposition in both Houses. It was a rendezvous and round of cabinet dinners for the opposition. Here were planned and arranged all the measures for attack on the ministry. Each member had his measure or his question in turn; the plans of debate and manœuvre were preconcerted, and to each was assigned that share in the attack which he was most competent to perform. This club, aided by some popular newspapers, announced its days of dining, proclaimed its sentiments in the shape of resolutions, and enforced them in the press by articles and paragraphs. Some men afterwards well-known as United Irishmen, became members of the Whig Club; especially Archibald Hamilton Rowan, a gentleman of property in the county of Down, and James Napper Tandy, the Volunteer Artillery commander, who was admitted by acclamation. Fitzgibbon (Earl of Clare), in his celebrated speech for the Union—which is the most valuable historic document concerning the events of his day (on the side of plunder, corruption, and English domination) thus, with vindictive sarcasm, speaks of the buff-and-blue club:—"The better to effectuate the great



national objects of a limitation of the pension list, an exclusion of pensioners from the House of Commons, a restriction of placemen who should sit there, and a responsibility for the receipt and issue of the public treasury, a Whig Club was announced in a manifesto, signed and countersigned, charging the British Government with a deliberate and systematic intention of sapping the liberties and subverting the Parliament of Ireland. All persons of congenial character and sentiment were invited to range under the Whig banner, for the establishment and protection of the Irish constitution, on the model of the Revolution of 1688; and under this banner was ranged such a motley collection of congenial characters, as never before were assembled for the reformation of the State. Mr. Napper Tandy was received by acclamation, as a statesman too important and illustrious to be committed to the hazard of a ballot. Mr. Hamilton Rowan also repaired to the Whig banner. Unfortunately, the political career of these gentlemen has been arrested; Mr. Tandy's by an attainder of felony, and an attainder of treason; Mr. Hamilton Rowan's by an attainder of treason. The Whig secretary, if he does not stand in the same predicament, is now a prisoner at the mercy of the Crown, on his own admission of his treason; and if I do not mistake, the whole society of Irish Whigs have been admitted, *ad eundem*, by their Whig brethren of England. In the fury of political resentment, some noblemen and gentlemen of the first rank in this country stooped to associate with the refuse of the community, men whose principles they held in abhorrence, and whose manners and deportment must always have excited their disgust."

There was public thanksgiving in the churches of Dublin for the King's recovery: and in the Catholic chapel of Francis Street a solemn High Mass was performed "with a new grand *Te Deum* composed on the occasion by Giordani. The Catholics were still unrecognized by the law, as citizens or members of civil society, and existed only 'by connivance;' but some Catholic writers tell us with complacency, as a happy instance of the increasing liberality of the times, that several of the first Protestant nobility and gentry assisted at this Mass. Plowden says, 'So illustrious an assemblage had never met in a Catholic place of worship in that kingdom since the Reformation. Besides the principal part of their own nobility and gentry, there were present on the occasion the Duke of Leinster, the Earls and Countesses of Belvedere, Arran, and Portarlington, Countesses of Carhampton and Ely, Lords Tyrone, Valentia, and Delvin, Mr. D. La Touche and family, Mr. Grattan, Major Doyle, Mrs. Jeffries, Mrs. Trant, and several other persons of the first distinction.'"

In the month of June of this year the Marquis of Buckingham went to Cork, stayed for a day at the villa of Mr. Lee at Black Rock, and from thence quietly embarked for England. He never returned: and it was observed by Mr. O'Neill in the House of Commons "that if he had not taken a back-stairs departure from the kingdom, he would have been greeted on his retreat in a very different manner from what he had been on his arrival." Of the course of this bad Viceroy's government we find no better summary than that given by Mr. Grattan in a speech delivered while Lord Buckingham still sat in Dublin Castle.

"This was the man; you remember his entry into the capital, trampling on the hearse of the Duke of Rutland, and seated in a triumphal car, drawn by public credulity; on one side fallacious hope, and on the other many-mouthed profession: a figure with two faces, one turned to the treasury, and the other presented to the people; and with a double tongue, speaking contradictory languages.

"This minister alights; justice looks up to him with empty hopes, and speculation faints with idle alarms; he finds the city a prey to an unconstitutional police—he continues it; he finds the country overburdened with a shameful pension list—he increases it; he finds the House of Commons swarming with placemen—he multiplies them; he finds the salary of the Secretary increased to prevent a pension—he grants a pension; he finds the kingdom drained by absentee employments, and by compensations to buy them home—he gives the best reversion in the country to an absentee, his brother; he finds the Government at different times had disgraced itself by creating sinecures to gratify corrupt affection—he makes two commissioners of the rolls, and gives one of them to another brother; he finds the second council to the commissioners put down because useless—he revives it; he finds the boards of accounts and stamps annexed by public compact—he divides them; he finds the boards of customs and excise united by public compact—he divides them; he finds three resolutions, declaring that seven commissioners are sufficient—he makes nine; he finds the country has suffered by some peculations in the ordnance—he increases the salaries of offices, and gives the places to Members of Parliament."

Before dismissing the Marquis of Buckingham and his Viceroyalty, it is right to add that during his government the pension list, already enormous, was increased by new pensions to the amount of £13,000 a-year.\* It was a good argument, morally,

\* This being mere matter of account, says Mr. Grattan, I extract it from

for reform, but a still better argument, materially and practically, against reform. Parliamentary patriots might have seen that they were moving in a vicious circle: the more irresistible, logical, and argumentative were their assaults on the citadel of corruption the more impregnable became that citadel, by means of the very corruption itself: and it must be admitted that although the Marquis of Buckingham absconded, like any defaulting bank officer from Ireland, he left British policy in full, successful, and triumphant operation.

On the 30th of June, 1789, Fitzgibbon, the new Lord Chancellor, and Mr. Foster the Speaker of the House, were sworn in lords-justices. The Marquis of Buckingham resigned, and was succeeded by the Earl of Westmoreland.

In the last year of the Buckingham administration, the violent feuds of the Peep-of-Day Boys and Defenders had taken almost the proportions of a small civil war. Many of the Protestant landlords in Armagh and Tyrone Counties diligently fomented and embittered these disputes, "with the diabolical purpose," says Mr. Plowden, "of breaking up the union of the Protestants and Catholics. which had been effected by serving together as Volunteers, and was one of the effects of that system, which the Government appeared most to dread. Reports were industriously

the papers laid before Parliament. Appendix to the 13th vol. *Journ. Com.*, page 271.

*A list of all pensions placed on the Civil Establishment during the period of the Marquis of Buckingham's Administration, with an account of the total Amount thereof.*

Fitzherbert Richards, Esq., . .	£400	Brought up, . .	£9,700
James Cavandish, Esq., . . .	150	Charles Viscount Ranelagh,	
Harriet Cavandish, . . .	150	and Sarah, Viscountess	
Lionel, Lord Viscount		Ranelagh his wife, and	
Strangford, . . . .	400	survivor, . . . .	400
Robert Thornton, Esq., . .	300	Lucia Agar, Viscountess Clif-	
Right Hon. Thomas Orde, .	1700	den, and Emily Anne	
Duke of Gloucester, . . .	4000	Agar her daughter, and	
Georgina, Viscountess Boyne,	500	survivor, . . . .	300
Lady Catherine Marley, . .	300	Sir Henry Mannix, Bart., . .	500
Honourable Rose Browne, .	300	Sir Richard Johnstone, Bart.,	
Walter Taylor, . . . .	300	and Wm. Johnstone, Esq.,	
Francis d'Ivernois, . . . .	300	his son, and survivor, . .	800
David Jebb, Esq., . . . .	300	Sarah Hernon, . . . .	70
Lady Catherine Toole, . .	200	Elizabeth Hernon, . . . .	70
Thomas Coughlan, additional,	200	Henry Loftus, Esq., . . . .	300
William Viscount Chetwynd,		Diana Loftus, . . . .	300
additional, . . . .	200	William Colville, Esq., . .	600
Carry up, . . . .	£9,700		£13,010



set afloat, and greedily credited by most Protestants of the county of Armagh, who long had been pre-eminent amongst their brethren for their zealous antipathy to Popery, that if Catholics, who had obtained arms, and learned the use of them during the war, were permitted to retain them, they would soon be used in erecting Popery on the ruins of the Protestant religion. The Defenders had long and frequently complained, that all efforts to procure legal redress against the outrages committed upon them by the Peep-of-Day Boys were unavailing : that their oppressors appeared to be rather countenanced, than checked by the civil power ; and that the necessity of the case had driven them into counter-combinations to defend their lives and properties against these uncontrolled marauders. Whilst these petty, but fatal internal hostilities were confined chiefly to the county of Armagh, it appears that the Defenders had generally remained passive according to their first institution and appellation : and that they only became aggressors, when they afterwards were compelled to emigrate from their country. Their hostility was now at its height ; Government sent down two troops to quell them, but above fifty on both sides had been killed in an affray before the horse arrived. Tranquillity lasted whilst the troops remained. But it was impossible that a large assemblage of men, void of education, prudence, or control, should long remain together without mischief."

The "Defenders," that is the luckless Catholics of those northern counties, struggling only to live by their labour ; surrounded by a larger population of insolent and ferocious Protestant farmers, remained *always*, as their name imports, strictly on the defensive. They never were mad enough to become "aggressors" at all : and Mr. Plowden, in the passage just cited, falls into the not unusual error of Catholic writers, who are so determined to be impartial that they lean to the party which they abhor. It is right to understand once for all—and we shall have but too many occasions of illustrating the fact—that in all the violent and bloody contentions which have taken place between the Catholics and Protestants of Ulster from that day to the present, without any exception, the Protestants have been the wanton aggressors. It was with the utmost difficulty that Catholics could procure arms ; but they knew that their Protestant neighbours were all armed. They knew also that if there were to be any examination into the facts before justices of the peace, or at the assizes, they were sure to meet a bitter, contemptuous hostility on the bench and in the jury-box ; and witnesses ready to swear that a Popish funeral was a military parade, and a faction-

fight an insurrection. Therefore it was not in the nature of things that such an oppressed race should voluntarily seek a collision or should resort to violence save in the utmost extremity of almost despairing resistance. It is true also, that from the very origin of Peep-of-Day Boys (who afterwards ripened into Orangemen), down to the present moment (1867), many of the greatest proprietors in Ulster, peers and commoners, have carefully stimulated the ferocity of the ignorant Protestant yeomanry by their own insolent behaviour towards the oppressed people, and especially by inculcating and enlarging upon all the dreadful details of that bloody fable, the "Popish Massacre" of 1641. Sir John Temple's horrible romance was a fifth gospel to the "Ascendency" of the North; and was often enlarged upon (like the other four) by clergymen in their pulpits, to show that it is the favourite enjoyment of Papists to rip up Protestant women with knives; to murder the mothers and then to put the infants to their dead mother's breast, and say: "*Suck, English bastard!*"—to delude men out of houses by offers of quarter, and then to cut their throats, and so on. Indeed when the conscientious Dr. Curry published his examination of the histories of that pretended massacre, his friends feared for his life: it was held proof positive, in his day, of a design to "bring in the Pretender," if one presumed to deny or doubt the terrible drowning of Protestants at Portadown bridge—or to question the fact of their ghosts appearing in the river at night, breast-high in the water, and shrieking "*Revenge! Revenge!*" From such historic literature as this, were derived the opinions formed of Catholics by Peep-of-Day Boys, and by their worthy successors the Orangemen. The baleful seeds of hatred and iniquity sown thus in the minds of benighted Protestants, by those who ought to have taught them better, fell in congenial soil, and grew, flourished, and ripened, as we shall soon have to narrate, in a harvest of bloody fruit.

The Earl of Westmoreland's administration was precisely like that of his predecessors. It was observed in Parliament by several of the opposition members, "that it was but a continuance of the former administration under a less unpopular head." Major Doyle said (10 Parl. Deb., p. 233):—"The same measures were continued by the present Viceroy, as if some malicious demon had shot into him the spirit of his departed predecessor, and that the Castle of Dublin was only the reflected shadows of the Palace of Stowe."

It is truly irksome to follow the unavailing Parliamentary struggles made by a few faithful Irishmen in those days; and the commemoration of them might well be dispensed with but for the

pride and pleasure which we cannot but feel in the knowledge that even in that dark day there were some glorious intellects and noble hearts in Ireland, who, environed around and almost overwhelmed by the deluge of scoundrelism, yet did hold up the standard of rectitude and call upon the demoralized nation to follow that standard. It was the voice of one crying in the wilderness. We find in the Parliamentary debates, during the Session of 1790, the same sort of series of motions for committees, or for resolutions, against corruption, against increase of pensions and the like, with which the country was now familiar. It was familiar also with the uniform defeat of all those efforts. Mr. Curran, for example, moved, "That a humble address should be presented to his Majesty, praying that he would order to be laid before that House the particulars of the causes, consideration, and representations, in consequence of which the boards of stamps and accounts had been divided, with an increase of salary to the officers; also, that he would be graciously pleased to communicate to that House the names of the persons who recommended that measure."

In his speech in support of this motion, Curran assailed the purchased majority with some of that biting and devouring sarcasm which the Court so much dreaded, and which—had Curran been purchasable—would have insured him the highest price.

"He brought forward that motion," he said, "not as a question of finance, not as a question of regulation, but as a penal inquiry, and the people would now see, whether they were to hope for help *within these walls*." He rose in an assembly of three hundred persons, one hundred of whom had places or pensions; in an assembly, one-third of whom had their ears sealed against the complaints of the people, and their eyes intently turned to their own interest; he rose before the whisperers of the treasury, the bargainers and the runners of the Castle: he addressed an audience, before whom was holden forth the doctrine, that the Crown ought to use its influence on the Members of that House.

He rose to try when the sluices of corruption had been let loose upon them, whether there were any means left to stem that torrent.

The debate broke out into great intemperance on both sides: the division upon the motion was 81 in support, and 141 against it.

Mr. Curran's doubt "whether there was hope for help within those walls," was plainly ripening into a certainty, that there was none.

In the same way we find the indefatigable Mr. Forbes again



trying his place bill and pension bill. This time he moved for an address to the King, setting forth the shabby details which he had long busied himself in bringing to light:—how there was an immense increase in the pension list, of pensions granted to Members of that House, at the pleasure of the Crown. How “an addition of £300 per annum, has been lately granted to the salary of the customer of Kinsale, to commence from the 29th of September, 1789; and a further addition of £200 payable on a contingency, both for the life of the present possessor: an office which has been for years considered as useless and obsolete, to which no duty whatsoever is annexed, nor any attendance required. That an addition of £400 per annum has been lately granted to the salary of comptroller of the pipe, though £53 10s. has for years been considered as an adequate compensation for the discharge of the duties of that office. That an addition of £150 per annum has also been lately granted to the barrack-master of Dublin. *That the persons to whom those additional salaries have been granted, are all Members of this House?*” and so forth—things which the King and Mr. Pitt, his minister, knew very well; which they intended; in which they meant to persevere; and which they called governing the country. Of course the address to the King was negatived by a large majority: the “comptroller of the pipe” and the customer of Kinsale were not likely to vote for a measure which would deprive their little families of bread. Mr. Grattan spoke on this motion of Forbes: but perhaps the most notable passage in the debate is the short, nervous speech of Mr. O’Neil, which plainly showed that he, too, despaired of effecting anything in Parliament, and foresaw another kind of struggle. Mr. O’Neil said “he thought it wholly unnecessary for gentlemen on the other side to adduce a single argument upon any question, while they had an omnipotent number of 140 to support them. On the subject of influence, the denial of it, he said, was ridiculous, as there was not a lady then sitting at tea in Dublin, who, if she were told that there were 120 men in that House, composed of placemen and pensioners, would not be able to say how the question would be decided, as well as the tellers on the division. He said the very first act in every Session of Parliament, which was the bill of supply, went to raise the interest for a million and a half of money for ministers to divide amongst themselves. I do say, and I said it prophetically,” continued he, “that the people will resist it. The Members of this House bear but a small proportion to the people at large. There are gentlemen outside these doors, of as good education and of as much judgment of the relative duties of

representation, as any man within doors, and matters are evidently ripening, and will shortly come to a crisis." Mr. O'Neil was right: but he and Mr. Grattan, and others who acted with them, are never to be forgiven, that they did not help matters to come to a crisis, and did not preside over and guide that crisis when it came.

The remainder of this shameful Parliament is little worthy of commemoration. Mr. George Ponsonby moved a resolution against places and pensions; defeated by a large majority. Mr. Grattan, filled with the same *sæva indignatio* which once gnawed the heart of Swift, astonished the House by a speech calling for impeachment of ministers, concluding with this motion, "that a select committee be appointed to inquire in the most solemn manner, whether the late or present administration have entered into any corrupt agreement with any person or persons, to recommend such person or persons to his Majesty as fit and proper to be by him made peers of this realm, in consideration of such person or persons giving certain sums of money to be laid out in procuring the return of members to serve in Parliament, contrary to the rights of the people, inconsistent with the independence of Parliament, and in violation of the fundamental laws of the land." It was defeated by the usual majority; 144 against, and 82 for the motion. A few days after, Mr. Grattan was provoked to utter one of his audacious speeches in the House. It was in one of the debates on Mr. Forbes's motion:—"Sir, I have been told it was said, that I should have been stopped, should have been expelled the Commons, should have been delivered up to the bar of the Lords for the expressions delivered that day.

"I will repeat what I said on that day: I said that his Majesty's ministers had sold the peerages, for which offence they were impeachable. I said they had applied the money for the purpose of purchasing seats in the House of Commons for the servants or followers of the Castle, for which offence I said they were impeachable. I said they had done this, not in one or two, but in several instances, for which complication of offences I said his Majesty's ministers were impeachable, as public malefactors, who had conspired against the common weal, the independence of Parliament, and the fundamental laws of the land; and I offered, and dared them to put this matter in a course of inquiry. I added, that I considered them as public malefactors, whom we were ready to bring to justice. I repeat these charges now, and if anything more severe were on a former occasion expressed, I beg to be reminded of it, and I will again repeat it. Why do you not expel me now? Why not send me to the bar of the

Lords? Where is your adviser? Going out of the House I shall repeat my sentiments, that his Majesty's ministers are guilty of impeachable offences; and advancing to the bar of the Lords, I shall repeat those sentiments, or if the Tower is to be my habitation, I will there meditate the impeachment of these ministers, and return not to capitulate, but to punish. Sir, I think I know myself well enough to say, that if called forth to suffer in a public cause, I will go farther than my prosecutors, both in virtue and in danger."

All similar efforts failed in the same manner; effecting nothing but an occasional opportunity of discharging a torrent of indignant invective against the solid phalanx of Castle members, equally insensible to invective, to sarcasm, to shame, and to conscience; and the Parliament was prorogued on the 5th of April, 1790; the Viceroy assuring them in his speech from the throne that "he had great pleasure in signifying his Majesty's approbation of the zeal they had shown for the public interest, and the despatch with which they had concluded the national business." Three days after the Parliament was dissolved.

But although the Parliament of the "independent" kingdom of Ireland was in so wofully corrupt a condition, yet we find that in material prosperity the country continued to advance. The population had increased very rapidly, and it is estimated for the year 1788, at 4,040,000, an increase of a million and a half in twenty years. This is a sure sign of general ease and abundance of the necessaries of life. The revenue was also increasing fully in proportion to the increase of people; and the Catholics, being now empowered to hold longer leases, and to take mortgages on money lent, had well improved their limited opportunities, and were become in all the towns an opulent and influential portion of the people. Yet the Catholics, while personally they were respected, were as a body both oppressed and insulted. Of the four millions, they were more than three; yet this great mass of people, the original and rightful owners of all the land, were still a proscribed race, still under the full operation of the most odious of the penal laws, excluded from Parliament, from the franchise, from the professions, from the corporations, from the juries, from the magistracy, from all civil and military employment. Public ceremonials were calculated and devised with the special design to humiliate them, and remind them of the high national estate from which they had fallen; and even in those proud days of the Volunteering, the anniversaries of their fatal defeats were regularly celebrated in Dublin by the high officers of State with all possible civic and military pomp. The author of the "Irish



Abroad and at Home" tells us, from his own recollections:—"King William's birth-day (the 4th of November) was observed with great ceremony. Within my own recollection, and even till the period of the Union, on each 4th of November, the troops composing the garrison of Dublin marched from their respective barracks to the Royal Exchange, and there turning to the right up to the Castle, and to the left to the College, lined the streets, Cork Hill, Dame Street, and College Green, on each side of the way.

"At the same time the Lord Lieutenant would be holding a levee; a drawing-room wound up the observances, at which the nobility, the bishops, the Members of the House of Commons (the Speaker at their head), the judges, the bar, the provost, vice-provost, and fellows of Trinity College, the lord mayor, aldermen, and other public functionaries were present. The levee over, the Lord Lieutenant issued in his state-carriage and with great pomp from the Castle, passed down the line of streets, and round the statue of King William, and then returned to the Castle; followed also in carriages by the great officers of State, the bishops, the Houses of Lords and Commons, and those of the gentry who had been present at the levee."

But as the Catholics advanced in prosperity and increased in numbers, this condition of inferiority in their own native land became more and more intolerable to them; the complete failure of the constitutional "independence" of '82 was creating amongst the more rational Protestants a desire of uniting themselves with the powerful Catholic masses; a "Catholic Committee" had now been for some years in existence, connived at by Government, and on the whole there was a considerable ferment in the public mind at the moment when, on the 14th of July, 1789, all Europe rang and shook with the downfall of the Bastille. Within three weeks after, on the memorable 4th of August, feudality and privilege were suddenly struck down and swept away; in that most aristocratic of countries all men became suddenly equal in one night; and the great French Revolution was in full career.

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## CHAPTER XXV.

1790—1791.

NOTWITHSTANDING the progress which had been made by the people in political knowledge and spirit, stimulated by the mighty events then going forward in France, yet the influence of the Castle prevented any great change in the return of Members to the new Parliament. The dissolution took place on the 8th of April, 1790, and the new Parliament was summoned to meet at Dublin on the 20th of May, but before that time, was further prorogued to the 10th of July, when it met for despatch of business.

Such of the constituencies as were really free to *elect*, of course took care to send to Parliament all the most prominent reformers. Grattan, Forbes, Curran, Ponsonby, Lord Henry Fitzgerald, occupied their old places on the opposition bench. We find among the new members several noted names. A certain young Major Wellesley was returned for the borough of Trim, afterwards called to high destinies under the title of Duke of Wellington. Jonah Barrington was Member for Tuam; he had seen the rise, and was destined to chronicle the Rise and Fall, of the Irish nation. Arthur O'Connor came as Member for Philipstown; his name will appear again in this narrative. Robert Stewart came as one of the Members for Down County; and had an opportunity of studying the modes of buying and selling in that great mart of votes and influences; opportunities which he improved with the zeal of a clerk in a commercial house learning his business. We shall see that he spent the season of his apprenticeship profitably. In the mean time, it is interesting to record that this gentleman sought his election, and was returned, expressly as an avowed reformer and patriot; and that on the hustings at Downpatrick he took the following pledge:—"That he would in and out of the House, with all his ability and influence, promote the success of a bill for amending the representation of the people; a bill for preventing pensioners from sitting in Parliament, or such placemen as cannot sit in the *British* House of Commons; a bill for limiting the numbers of placemen and pensioners and the amount of pensions; a bill for preventing revenue-officers from voting at elections; a bill for rendering the servants of the Crown in Ireland responsible for the expenditure of the public money," &c.,—in short, all the measures

of reform which were at that time the ostensible objects of the opposition.

The purpose of convening the Parliament was to obtain a vote of credit; accordingly the Chancellor of the Exchequer moved for a vote of credit for £200,000, to be applied by the Lord Lieutenant towards the expense of Government.

On the 24th of the month his Majesty's answer to the address of the Commons was communicated to the House, which was strongly expressive of his satisfaction at their determination to support the honour of his Crown, and the common interest of the empire, at that important crisis; the Parliament was then prorogued, and did not meet for the despatch of business till the 20th of January, 1791. In the autumn, Mr. Secretary Hobart went over to England, as it was generally presumed, to concert the plan of the next Parliamentary campaign with the British Cabinet. It was also rumoured, that the Irish Government having in the widest plenitude adopted the principles and system of Lord Buckingham's administration, the right honourable secretary had also much consultation with that nobleman. Lord Westmoreland in the mean time was not inattentive to the means of acquiring popularity, the want of which in his predecessor he felt very strongly operating upon his own Government. In a country excursion for nearly nine months he visited most of the nobility through the kingdom; his excellency and his lady on all solemn occasions appeared clad in Irish manufactures; just as in our own day an ameliorative Viceroy has sometimes condescended to wear a "poplin waistcoat." We are even told that Lord Westmoreland further increased his popularity by giving permission to represent "The Beggar's Opera," which was then a favourite of the Dublin people, but the representation of which had been prohibited in Lord Buckingham's time.

The business of this Session differed very little from that of the last before the dissolution. The "Patriots" appeared rather to have lost, than acquired, strength by the new election. Their number did not at any time during the course of this Session exceed fourscore. But their resolution to press all the questions which they had brought forward in the last Parliament, appeared more violently determined than ever; insomuch, that Mr. George Ponsonby in replying to Mr. Cook, assured him that the hope he had expressed of gentlemen on his side of the House not bringing forward those measures, which they had done for some Sessions past, was a lost hope, for that nothing but the hand of death or success should ever induce them to give up their pursuit. Accordingly, Mr. Ponsonby, on the 3rd of February, moved as



usual for a select committee to inquire into the pension list. It was got rid of by a motion for adjournment. Then Mr. Grattan, supported by Mr. Curran, renewed the charge upon its practice of selling peerages ; it was rejected by 135 against 85.

Mr. Curran then moved the following resolution, in which he was seconded by Mr. Grattan, viz. :—"That a committee be appointed, consisting of Members of both Houses of Parliament, who do not hold any employment or enjoy any pension under the Crown, to inquire in the most solemn manner, whether the late or present administration have, directly or indirectly, entered into any corrupt agreement with any person or persons, to recommend such person or persons to his Majesty for the purpose of being created peers of this kingdom, in consideration of their paying certain sums of money, to be laid out in the purchase of seats for members to serve in Parliament, contrary to the rights of the people, inconsistent with the independence of Parliament, and in direct violation of the fundamental laws of the land."

The ministerial members on all these occasions loudly complained of the reiteration of the old charges even without new arguments to support them ; they strongly insisted that no particular facts were alleged, much less proved ; and that general fame, surmise, and assertion, were no grounds for Parliamentary impeachments, or any other solemn proceedings in that House. Mr. Grattan, before answering the objections advanced against the motion, adverted to the general dull and empty declamation uttered by the advocates of a corrupt government against the defenders of an injured people.

Four times, had those advocates told them, they had brought this grievance forth, as if grievances were only to be matter of public debate when they were matters of novelty ; or as if grievances were trading questions for a party or a person to press, to sell, and to abandon ; or as if they came thither to act farces to please the appetite of the public, and did not sit there to persevere in the redress of grievances, pledged as they were, and covenanted to the people on these important subjects.

Under these continual defeats of every generous effort to abate a single evil or injustice, it seems to have been some satisfaction to the members of the opposition to indulge at least in violent philippics. Mr. Grattan, for instance, in making a renewed effort against the unconstitutional police system :—Ministers had, he said, resorted to a place army and a pensioned magistracy : the one was to give boldness to corruption in Parliament, and the other to give the minister's influence patronage in the city. Their means were, this police establishment : the plan they did

not entirely frame: they found it. A bill had shown its face in the British House of Commons for a moment, and had been turned out of the doors immediately: a scavenger would have found it in the streets of London: the groping hands of the Irish ministry picked it up, and made it the law of the land.

The motion against the police was negatived by what Mr. Grattan called the *dead majority*. Next the opposition tried another favourite measure—to prevent placemen and pensioners from having seats in Parliament; in other words, that the “dead majority” should be turned out of doors and deprived of their daily bread. This measure was supported as usual by Mr. Forbes, and of course by the same arguments: there was nothing new to say: there was the evil visible before them; or rather the 104 evils, each with its bribe in its pocket, wrung from the earnings of those people whose Legislature they poisoned. But the Castle members were utterly disgusted with these threadbare topics; they called for something new; and so Mr. Mason had the cool audacity to say, that having opposed this bill every Session for thirty years, he would not weary the House with fresh arguments against it: his decided opinion was, that the influence of the Crown was barely sufficient to preserve the constitution, and to prevent it from degenerating into the worst of all possible Governments, a democracy.

Indeed, the terror of this democracy, and the manifest peril to oligarchical government both in England and in Ireland, arising from the thundering French revolution and its reverberations through many millions of hearts in the two islands—these were the considerations that rendered the supporters of Government more sternly resolute to maintain every part of their system as it stood. Reformers of any abuse began about this time to be called “Jacobins,” and the “Mountain;” and it was intended for the most ribald abuse, to charge a person with advocating the *Rights of Man*.

Equally violent and equally unsuccessful were the four remaining attacks made by the gentlemen of the opposition: viz., Mr. Grattan’s motion for the encouragement of the reclaiming of barren land; on the first reading of the Pension Bill; the second reading of the Responsibility Bill; and Mr. George Ponsonby’s motion respecting *flats* for levying unassessed damages upon the parties’ *affidavits* of their own imaginary losses.

We must now turn away for a time from these eloquent futilities in Parliament. It is difficult now to analyse the strong political passion which seized upon all the public, as the mighty drama of French Revolution swept upon its way. The year

1791 stimulated that passion to the greatest height. The great theatrical performance of the federation of all mankind in the Champ-de-Mars, had taken place on the 14th of July of the last year, when the King of France had sworn to maintain the constitution. The church lands had been sold for the use of the public: Mirabeau, the great tribune, was dead, and the last hope of conciliation between the people and the Crown, died with him. Then the great coalition of Europe against France was formed; and the King attempted his flight beyond the Rhine. Every thing betokened both war and invasion coming from abroad, and the approaching triumph at home of the Jacobin Republicans, with the usual violence and slaughter which attend such immense changes. It was impossible to look on at these things unmoved. Two fierce parties were at once formed in Ireland, the one Republican, the other anti-Gallican.

The sympathy which several of the armed corps and other public bodies exultingly expressed with the assertors of civil freedom in those countries, was obnoxious to Government, and it became the system of the Castle to affix a marked stigma upon every person who countenanced or spoke in favour of any measure that bore the semblance of reform or revolution. Even the ardour for commemorating the era of 1688, was attempted to be damped; the word *liberty* always carried with it suspicion, often reprobation. In proportion to the progress of the French revolution to those scenes, which at last outraged humanity, were some efforts in favour of the most constitutional liberty resisted in Parliament, as attempts to introduce a system of French equality. Such was the general panic, such the real or assumed execration of every thing that had a tendency to democracy, that comparatively few of the higher orders through the kingdom retained, or avowed, those general Whig principles, which two years before that man was not deemed loyal, who did not profess.

Mr. Burke by his book on the French Revolution, published in the year 1790, had worked a great change in the public mind, and the few in the upper walks of life, who did not become his proselytes, merely retaining their former principles, were astonished to find their ranks thinned and their standard fallen.

The Catholics also could not possibly remain insensible to the great events of the time: but the effect produced upon them was a strangely complex kind. As a grievously oppressed race they could not but sympathize with the oppressed peasantry and middle classes of France as they struck off link after link of the



feudal chain: but on the other hand the Irish Catholics, not like the French, had remained deeply attached to their religion, the only consolation they had: and the French "Civil Constitution" for the clergy, and sale of church lands, were represented to them as anti-religious, and dangerous to faith and morals. Publications were circulated upon the conservative tendencies of the Catholic religion\* to render its followers loyal, peaceable, and dutiful subjects. Pastoral instructions were published by the Catholic bishops in their respective dioceses, in favour of loyal subordination and against "French principles." On the other hand, the trading Catholics in the towns, and such of the country population as were readers of books, were very generally indoctrinated with sentiments of extreme liberalism. It was not to be expected, they thought, that *they* could be "loyal" to a Government which they knew only by its oppressions and its insults: it was not likely that they would be indignant against the French for abolishing *tithes*, nor for selling out in small farms the vast domains of the emigrant nobles. On the whole, therefore a very large proportion of the Catholics looked to the proceedings of the French with admiration and with hope. As for the Irish Dissenters, who were much more numerous than the Protestants of the Established Church, they were *Gallican* and republican to a man.

Considering that the only real enemy of Ireland, both then and ever since, was the English Government, it was very unfortunate that the divisions amongst the Catholics themselves, and the hereditary estrangement and aversion between them and the Presbyterians, made it next to impossible to create a united Irish nation, with one sole bond, and one single aim, the destruction of British Government in this island. This, however, was precisely the great task undertaken by Theobald Wolfe Tone, a young Protestant lawyer of Dublin; of English descent by both the father's side and the mother's, a graduate of Trinity College, and who at the time when he first flung himself into the grand revolutionary scheme of associating the Catholics to the body of the nation, was not personally acquainted with a single individual of that creed. It is needless to say that Tone had been a democrat from the very commencement—that is from the commencement of the French revolution. In his narrative of his own life, Tone has given so clear an account of the dissensions which broke up the Catholic Committee, the circumstances which led to his own

\* One of the most noted of these publications was one called *The Case Stated*, by Mr. Plowden.

alliance with the Catholic body, and the first formation of the clubs of "United Irishmen," that it may here be presented in his own words, in a slightly abridged form:—

"The General Committee of the Catholics, which, since the year 1792, has made a distinguished feature in the politics of Ireland, was a body composed of their bishops, their country gentlemen, and of a certain number of merchants and traders, all residents in Dublin, but named by the Catholics in the different towns corporate to represent them. The original object of this institution was to obtain the repeal of a partial and oppressive tax called quarterage, which was levied on the Catholics only, and the Government, which found the committee at first a convenient instrument on some occasions, connived at its existence. So degraded was the Catholic mind at the period of the formation of their committee, about 1770, and long after, that they were happy to be allowed to go up to the Castle with an abominable slavish address to each successive viceroy, of which, moreover, until the accession of the Duke of Portland, in 1782, so little notice was taken that his grace was the first who condescended to give them an answer; and, indeed, for above twenty years, the sole business of the General Committee was to prepare and deliver in, those records of their depression. The effort which an honest indignation had called forth at the time of the Volunteer Convention, in 1783, seemed to have exhausted their strength, and they sunk back into their primitive nullity. Under this appearance of apathy, however, a new spirit was gradually arising in the body, owing, principally, to the exertions and the example of one man, John Keogh, to whose services his country, and more especially the Catholics, are singularly indebted. In fact, the downfall of feudal tyranny was acted in little on the theatre of the General Committee. The influence of their clergy and of their barons was gradually undermined, and the third estate, the commercial interest, rising in wealth and power, was preparing, by degrees, to throw off the yoke, in the imposing, or, at least, the continuing of which the leaders of the body, I mean the prelates and aristocracy, to their disgrace be it spoken, were ready to concur. Already had those leaders, acting in obedience to the orders of the Government which held them in fetters, suffered one or two signal defeats in the committee, owing principally to the talents and address of John Keogh; the parties began to be defined, and a sturdy democracy of new men, with bolder views and stronger talents, soon superseded the timid counsels and slavish measures of the ancient aristocracy. Every thing seemed tending to a better order of things among the Catholics,

and an occasion soon offered to call the energy of their new leaders into action.

“The Dissenters of the North, and more especially of the town of Belfast, are, from the genius of their religion and from the superior diffusion of political information among them, sincere and enlightened Republicans. They had ever been foremost in the pursuit of Parliamentary reform, and I have already mentioned the early wisdom and virtue of the town of Belfast, in proposing the emancipation of the Catholics so far back as the year, 1783.

“The Catholics, on their part, were rapidly advancing in political spirit and information. Every month, every day, as the revolution in France went prosperously forward, added to their courage and their force, and the hour seemed at last arrived, when, after a dreary oppression of about one hundred years, they were once more to appear on the political theatre of their country. They saw the brilliant prospect of success which events in France opened to their view, and they determined to avail themselves with promptitude of that opportunity, which never returns to those who omit it. For this, the active members of the General Committee resolved to set on foot an immediate application to Parliament, praying for a repeal of the Penal Laws. The first difficulty they had to surmount, arose in their own body; their peers, their gentry (as they affected to call themselves), and their prelates, either seduced or intimidated by Government, gave the measure all possible opposition; and at length, after a long contest, in which both parties strained every nerve, and produced the whole of their strength, the question was decided on a division in the committee, by a majority of at least six to one, in favour of the intended application. The triumph of the young democracy was complete; but, though the aristocracy was defeated, it was not yet entirely broken down. By the instigation of Government they had the meanness to secede from the General Committee, to disavow their acts, and even to publish in the papers, that they did not wish to embarrass the Government by advancing their claims of emancipation. It is difficult to conceive such a degree of political degradation; but what will not the tyranny of an execrable system produce in time? Sixty-eight gentlemen, individually of high spirit, were found, who publicly, and in a body, deserted their party, and their own just claims, and even sanctioned this pitiful desertion by the authority of their signatures. Such an effect had the operation of the Penal Laws on the minds of the Catholics of Ireland, as proud a race as any in all Europe!\*

\* Mr. Tone's account of the secession of the sixty-eight members from the



"The first attempts of the Catholic Committee failed totally; endeavouring to accommodate all parties, they framed a petition so humble that it ventured to ask for nothing, and even this petition they could not find a single Member of the Legislature to present; of so little consequence, in the year 1790, was the great mass of the Irish people! Not disheartened, however, by this defeat, they went on, and in the interval between that and the approaching Session, they were preparing measures for a second application. In order to add a greater weight and consequence to their intended petition, they brought over to Ireland Richard Burke, only son of the celebrated Edmund, and appointed him their agent to conduct their application to Parliament. This young man came over with considerable advantages, and especially with the *éclat* of his father's name, who, the Catholics concluded, and very reasonably, would, for his sake, if not for theirs, assist his son with his advice and directions. But their expectations in the event proved abortive, Richard Burke, with a considerable portion of talent from nature, and cultivated, as may be well supposed, with the utmost care by his father, who idolized him, was utterly deficient in judgment, in temper, and especially in the art of managing parties. In three or four months' time, during which he remained in Ireland, he contrived to embroil himself, and, in a certain degree, the Committee, with all parties in Parliament, the opposition as well as the Government, and ended his short and turbulent career by breaking with the General Committee. That body, however, treated him respectfully to the last, and, on his departure, they sent a deputation to thank him for his exertions, and presented him with the sum of two thousand guineas.

"It was pretty much about this time that my connection with the Catholic body commenced, in the manner which I am about to relate.

General Committee is not sufficiently explanatory. Mr. Plowden, an excellent authority on this point, says that it was caused chiefly by dissatisfaction on account of "public acts of communication of Protestants in the North with France." In particular, the people of Belfast had sent an address of warm congratulation to the Society of "Friends of the Constitution," at Bordeaux; and had received an eloquent reply. Communications of this kind, says Plowden, "gave particular offence to Government, who manifested great jealousy and diffidence towards all persons concerned in them." It was to express their horror of co-operating in any degree with such men and measures, that the men of landed property and the prelates seceded. The seceders shortly after presented to the Lord Lieutenant a petition or address, which went no farther than a general expression of submissiveness and respect to Government, "throwing themselves and their body on their humanity and wisdom." This was called tauntingly, the "Eleemosynary Address."

"Russell\* had, on his arrival to join his regiment at Belfast, found the people so much to his taste, and in return had rendered himself so agreeable to them, that he was speedily admitted into their confidence, and became a member of several of their clubs. This was an unusual circumstance, as British officers, it may well be supposed, were no great favourites with the republicans of Belfast. The Catholic question was, at this period, beginning to attract the public notice; and the Belfast Volunteers, on some public occasion, I know not precisely what, wished to come forward with a declaration in its favour. For this purpose, Russell, who, by this time, was entirely in their confidence, wrote to me to draw up and transmit to him such a declaration as I thought proper, which I accordingly did. A meeting of the corps was held in consequence, but an opposition unexpectedly arising to that part of the declarations which alluded directly to the Catholic claims, that passage was, for the sake of unanimity, withdrawn for the present, and the declarations then passed unanimously. Russell wrote me an account of all this, and it immediately set me to thinking more seriously than I had yet done upon the state of Ireland. I soon formed my theory, and on that theory I have unvaryingly acted ever since.

"To subvert the tyranny of our execrable Government, to break the connection with England, the never-failing source of all our political evils, and to assert the independence of my country—these were my objects. To unite the whole people of Ireland, to abolish the memory of all past dissensions, and to substitute the common name of Irishman, in place of the denominations of Protestant, Catholic, and Dissenter—these were my means. To effectuate these great objects, I reviewed the three great sects. The Protestants I despaired of from the outset, for obvious reasons. Already in possession, by an unjust monopoly, of the whole power and patronage of the country, it was not to be supposed they would ever concur in measures, the certain tendency of which must be to lessen their influence as a party, how much soever the nation might gain. To the Catholics I thought it unnecessary to address myself, because, as no change could make their political situation worse, I reckoned upon their support to a certainty; besides, they had already begun to manifest a strong sense of their wrongs and oppressions: and, finally, I well knew that, however it might be disguised or suppressed, there existed in the breast of every Irish Catholic, an inextirpable abhorrence of the English name and power. There remained only the Dis-

\* Thomas Russell, Tone's most intimate friend and comrade.

senters, whom I knew to be patriotic and enlightened ; however, the recent events at Belfast had showed me that all prejudice was not yet entirely removed from their minds. I sat down accordingly, and wrote a pamphlet, addressed to the Dissenters, and which I entitled "An argument on behalf of the Catholics of Ireland," the object of which was to convince them that they and the Catholics had but one common interest, and one "common enemy : " that the depression and slavery of Ireland was produced and perpetuated by the divisions existing between them, and that, consequently, to assert the independence of their country, and their own individual liberties, it was necessary to forget all former feuds, to consolidate the entire strength of the whole nation, and to form for the future but one people. These principles I supported by the best arguments which suggested themselves to me, and particularly by demonstrating that the cause of the failure of all former efforts, and more especially of the Volunteer Convention in 1783, was the unjust neglect of the claims of their Catholic brethren. This pamphlet, which appeared in September, 1791, under the signature of a Northern Whig, had a considerable degree of success. The Catholics (*with not one of whom I was at the time acquainted*) were pleased with the efforts of a Volunteer in their cause, and distributed it in all quarters. The people of Belfast, of whom I had spoken with respect and admiration I sincerely felt for them, and to whom I was also perfectly unknown, printed a very large edition, which they dispersed through the whole North of Ireland, and I have the great satisfaction to believe that many of the Dissenters were converted by my arguments. It is like vanity to speak of my own performances so much ; and the fact is, I believe that I am somewhat vain on that topic ; but, as it was the immediate cause of my being made known to the Catholic body, I may be, perhaps, excused for dwelling on a circumstance which I must ever look upon, for that reason, as one of the most fortunate of my life. As my pamphlet spread more and more, my acquaintance amongst the Catholics extended accordingly. My first friend in the body was John Keogh, and through him I became acquainted with all the leaders, as Richard McCormick, John Sweetman, Edward Byrne, Thomas Braughall, in short, the whole sub-committee, and most of the active members of the General Committee. It was a kind of fashion this winter (1791) among the Catholics to give splendid dinners to their political friends, in and out of Parliament, and I was always a guest, of course. I was invited to a grand dinner, given to Richard Burke, on his leaving Dublin, together with William Todd Jones, who had distinguished himself by a most



excellent pamphlet in favour of the Catholic cause, as well as to several entertainments, given by clubs and associations. I was invited to spend a few days in Belfast, in order to assist in framing the first club of United Irishmen, and to cultivate a personal acquaintance with those men whom, though I highly esteemed, I knew as yet but by reputation. In consequence, about the beginning of October, I went down with my friend Russell, who had, by this time, quit the army, and was in Dublin, on his private affairs. That journey was by far the most agreeable and interesting one I had ever made; my reception was of the most flattering kind, and I found the men of the most distinguished public virtue in the nation, the most estimable in all the domestic relations of life; I had the good fortune to render myself agreeable to them, and a friendship was then formed between us which I think it will not be easy to shake. It is a kind of injustice to name individuals, yet I cannot refuse myself the pleasure of observing how peculiarly fortunate I esteem myself in having formed connections with Samuel Neilson, Robert Simms, William Simms, William Sinclair, Thomas McCabe: I may as well stop here; for, in enumerating my most particular friends, I find I am, in fact, making out a list of the men of Belfast most distinguished for their virtue, talent, and patriotism. To proceed. We formed our club, of which I wrote the declaration, and certainly the formation of that club commenced a new epoch in the politics of Ireland. At length, after a stay of about three weeks, which I look back upon as perhaps the pleasantest in my life, Russell and I returned to Dublin, with instructions to cultivate the leaders in the popular interest, being Protestants, and, if possible, to form, in the capital, a club of United Irishmen. Neither Russell nor myself was known to one of those leaders; however, we soon contrived to get acquainted with James Napper Tandy, who was the principal of them, and, through him, with several others, so that, in a little time, we succeeded, and a club was accordingly formed, of which the Honourable Simon Butler was the first chairman, and Tandy the first secretary. The club adopted the declaration of their brethren of Belfast, with whom they immediately opened a correspondence. It is but justice to an honest man who has been persecuted for his firm adherence to his principles, to observe here, that Tandy, in coming forward on this occasion, well knew that he was putting to the most extreme hazard his popularity among the corporations of the City of Dublin, with whom he had enjoyed the most unbounded influence for near twenty years; and, in fact, in the event, his popularity was sacrificed. That did not prevent, however, his taking his part decidedly: he had the firm-

ness to forego the gratification of his private feelings for the good of his country. The truth is, Tandy was a very sincere Republican, and it did not require much argument to show him the impossibility of attaining a republic by any means short of the united powers of the whole people; he therefore renounced the lesser objects for the greater, and gave up the certain influence which he possessed (and had well earned) in the city, for the contingency of that influence which he might have (and well deserves to have) in the nation. For my own part, I think it right to mention, that, at this time, the establishment of a republic was not the immediate object of my speculations. My object was to secure the independence of my country under any form of government, to which I was led by a hatred of England, so deeply rooted in my nature, that it was rather an instinct than a principle. I left to others, better qualified for the inquiry, the investigation and merits of the different forms of government, and I contented myself with labouring on my own system, which was luckily in perfect coincidence as to its operation with that of those men who viewed the question on a broader and juster scale than I did at the time I mention."

Wolfe Tone was shortly after, on the recommendation of John Keogh, appointed secretary to the "General Committee" of the Catholics, and long laboured zealously in their service. But he was not content with mere Catholic agitation. He and his friends continued with unabated zeal in the organization of the United Irish Society, which he hoped to see swallow up all others.

On the 30th of December, 1791, the United Irishmen of Dublin held a special session, at which they approved of a circular letter which was calculated to encourage similar societies; and to it they annexed a declaration of their political sentiments, and the test which they had taken as a social and sacred compact to bind them more closely together. They also, in their publications animadverted severely upon the sixty-four addressers. The general disposition to republicanism which appeared in the publications and whole conduct of these new societies, became daily more and more obnoxious to Government: they were chiefly composed of Dissenters: yet several leading men amongst them were Protestants of the Established Church: it was believed and constantly preached up by the Castle, that this new, violent, and affectionate attachment of the Dissenters for their Roman Catholic brethren, proceeded not from any sentiment of liberality or toleration, but purely to engage the co-operation of the great mass of the people the more warmly in forwarding the several popular questions lately brought before Parliament.

The truth is that the patrician "Patriots" of Parliament were quite shy of association with the members of the new societies. Some of them were alarmed about French principles of democracy, which could scarcely be expected to be agreeable to a privileged class: others thought that the United Irishmen and the existing Catholic Committee both consisted of low people; and they were possessed by that general aversion felt by Members of Parliament against all extra Parliamentary movements.

From that time shyness, jealousy, and distrust subsisted between those new societies and the Whig Club, though the agents and writers for Government attempted to identify their views, measures, and principles, as appears by the newspapers, and other publications of that day. Tone, on his side, who had wholly given up Parliament as a thing not only useless but noxious to the nation, felt the utmost resentment at the members of the opposition for any longer keeping up the delusion of Parliamentary patriotism, and avowed that he respected more the Castle members themselves. "They want," said he, at least one vice, hypocrisy."

The Catholic General Committee had new life infused into it, through the energy of Keogh and the labours of Wolfe Tone.

"There seems," says Tone in his sanguine way "from this time out, a special Providence to have watched over the affairs of Ireland, and to have turned to her profit and advantage the deepest laid and most artful schemes of her enemies. Every measure adopted, and skilfully adopted, to thwart the expectations of the Catholics, and to crush the rising spirit of union between them and the Dissenters, has, without exception, only tended to confirm and fortify both, and the fact I am about to mention, for one, is a striking proof of the truth of this assertion. The principal charge in the general outcry raised in the House of Commons against the General Committee was, that they were a self-appointed body, not nominated by the Catholics of the nation, and consequently, not authorized to speak on their behalf. This argument, which, in fact, was the truth, was triumphantly dwelt upon by the enemies of the Catholics; but, in the end, it would have perhaps been more fortunate for their wishes, if they had not laid such a stress upon this circumstance, and drawn the line of separation so strongly between the General Committee and the body at large. For the Catholics throughout Ireland, who had hitherto been indolent spectators of the business, seeing their brethren of Dublin, and especially the General Committee, insulted and abused for their exertions in pursuit of that liberty which, if attained, must be a common blessing to all, came for-



ward as one man from every quarter of the nation, with addresses and resolutions, adopting the measures of the General Committee as their own; declaring that body the only organ competent to speak for the Catholics of Ireland, and condemning, in terms of the most marked disapprobation and contempt, the conduct of the sixty-eight apostates, who were so triumphantly held up by the hirelings of Government as the respectable part of the Catholic community. The question was now fairly decided. The aristocracy shrunk back in disgrace and obscurity, leaving the field open to the democracy, and that body neither wanted talents nor spirit to profit by the advantages of their present situation.

“It is to the sagacity of *Myles Keon, of Keonbrook, County Leitrim*, that his country is indebted for the system on which the General Committee was to be framed anew, in a manner that should render it impossible to bring it again in doubt whether that body were or not the organ of the Catholic will. His plan was to associate to the committee, as then constituted, two members from each county and great city, actual residents of the place which they represented, who were, however, only to be summoned upon extraordinary occasions, leaving the common routine of business to the original members, who, as I have already related, were all residents of Dublin. The committee, as thus constituted, would consist of half town and half country members; and the elections for the latter he proposed should be held by means of primary and electoral assemblies, held, the first in each parish, the second in each county and great town. He likewise proposed, that the town members should be held to correspond regularly with their country associates, these with their immediate electors, and these again with the primary assemblies. A more simple, and at the same time, more comprehensive organization could not be devised. By this means the General Committee became the centre of a circle embracing the whole nation, and pushing its rays instantaneously to the remotest parts of the circumference. The plan was laid, in writing, before the General Committee by Myles Keon, and, after mature discussion, the first part, relating to the association and election of the country members, was adopted with some slight variation: the latter part, relating to the constant communication with the mass of the people, was thought, under the circumstances, to be too hardy, and was, accordingly, dropped *sub silentio*.”

This was a project for a regular convention of delegates, which was then a measure perfectly legal, as indeed it still is in England.

On the proposal for this convention there was immediate alarm

and almost frantic rage on the part of the Ascendency : for the Catholics were by this time over three millions ; and the representatives of such a mass of people, meeting in Dublin, and backed by the active sympathies of the fast growing United Irish Society, were likely to be perilous to the Government at a moment of such high political excitement. Grand Juries and Town Corporations passed violent resolutions against it, and pledged themselves to resist and suppress it. But the committee had taken counsel's opinion, and felt quite secure on the legal ground. Some of the further proceedings may most fitly be given in the words of Wolfe Tone's own narrative, with which we must then part company, not without regret : for his "Autobiography" breaks off here :—\*

"This (1792) was a memorable year in Ireland. The publication of the plan for the new organizing of the General Committee gave an instant alarm to all the supporters of the British Government, and every effort was made to prevent the election of the country members ; for it was sufficiently evident that, if the representatives of three millions of oppressed people were once suffered to meet, it would not afterwards be safe, or indeed possible, to refuse their just demands. Accordingly, at the ensuing assizes, the grand juries, universally, throughout Ireland, published the most furious, I may say frantic, resolutions, against the plan and its authors, whom they charged with little short of high treason. Government, likewise, was too successful in gaining over the Catholic clergy, particularly the bishops, who gave the measure at first very serious opposition. The committee, however, was not daunted ; and, satisfied of the justice of their cause, and of their own courage, they laboured, and with success, to inspire the same spirit in the breasts of their brethren throughout the nation. For this purpose, their first step was an admirable one. By their order, I drew up a state of the case, with the plan for the organization of the committee annexed, which was laid before Simon Butler and Beresford Burton, two lawyers of great eminence, and, what was of consequence here, King's counsel, to know whether the committee had in any respect contravened the law of the land, or whether, by carrying the proposed plan into execution, the parties concerned would subject themselves to pain or penalty. The answers of both the lawyers were completely in our favour, and we instantly printed them in the papers, and dispersed them in handbills, letters, and all possible shapes. This blow was decisive

\* Some parts of his journals indeed will be found most valuable references farther on.

as to the legality of the measure. For the bishops, whose opposition gave us great trouble, four or five different missions were undertaken by different members of the sub-committee, into the provinces, at their own expense, in order to hold conferences with them, in which, with much difficulty, they succeeded so far as to secure the co-operation of some, and the neutrality of the rest of the prelates. On these missions the most active members were John Keogh and Thomas Braughall, neither of whom spared purse nor person where the interests of the Catholic body were concerned. I accompanied Mr. Braughall in his visit to Connaught, where he went to meet the gentry of that province at the great fair of Ballinasloe. As it was late in the evening when we left town, the postillion who drove us, having given warning, I am satisfied, to some footpads, the carriage was stopped by four or five fellows at the gate of Phoenix Park. We had two cases of pistols in the carriage, and we agreed not to be robbed. Braughall, who was at this time about sixty-five years of age, and lame from a fall off his horse some years before, was as cool and intrepid as man could be. He took the command, and by his orders I let down all the glasses, and called out to the fellows to come on, if they were so inclined, for that we were ready; Braughall desiring at the same time *not to fire, till I could touch the scoundrels*. This rather embarrassed them, and they did not venture to approach the carriage, but held a council of war at the horses' heads. I then presented one of my pistols at the postillion, swearing horribly that I would put him instantly to death if he did not drive over them, and I made him feel the muzzle of the pistol against the back of his head; the fellows on this took to their heels and ran off, and we proceeded on our journey without further interruption. When we arrived at the inn, Braughall, whose goodness of heart is equal to his courage, and no man is braver, began by abusing the postillion for his treachery, and ended by giving him half a crown. I wanted to break the rascal's bones, but he would not suffer me, and this was the end of our adventure.

"All parties were now fully employed preparing for the ensuing Session of Parliament. The Government, through the organ of the corporations and grand juries, opened a heavy fire upon us of manifestoes and resolutions. At first we were like young soldiers, a little stunned with the noise, but after a few rounds we began to look about us, and seeing nobody drop with all this furious cannonade, we took courage and determined to return the fire. In consequence, wherever there was a meeting of the Protestant Ascendency, which was the title assumed by that party (and a very impudent one it was), we took care it should be fol-



lowed by a meeting of the Catholics, who spoke as loud, and louder than their adversaries, and, as we had the right clearly on our side, we found no great difficulty in silencing the enemy on this quarter. The Catholics likewise took care, at the same time that they branded their enemies, to mark their gratitude to their friends, who were daily increasing, and especially to the people of Belfast, between whom and the Catholics the union was now completely established. Among the various attacks made on us this summer, the most remarkable for their virulence, were those of the grand jury of Louth, headed by the Speaker of the House of Commons; of Limerick, at which the Lord Chancellor assisted; and of the corporation of the City of Dublin; which last published a most furious manifesto, threatening us, in so many words with a resistance by force. In consequence, a meeting was held of the Catholics of Dublin at large, which was attended by several thousands, where the manifesto of the corporation was read and most ably commented upon by John Keogh, Dr. Ryan, Dr. McNeven, and several others, and a counter-manifesto being proposed, which was written by my friend Emmet, and incomparably well done, it was carried unanimously, and published in all the papers, together with the speeches above mentioned; and both speeches and the manifesto had such an infinite superiority over those of the corporation, which were also published and diligently circulated by the Government, that it put an end, effectually, to this warfare of resolutions.

“The people of Belfast were not idle on their part; they spared neither pains nor expense to propagate the new doctrine of the Union of Irishmen, through the whole North of Ireland, and they had the satisfaction to see their proselytes rapidly extending in all directions. In order more effectually to spread their principles, twelve of the most active and intelligent among them subscribed £250 each, in order to set on foot a paper, whose object should be to give a fair statement of all that passed in France, whither every one turned their eyes; to inculcate the necessity of union amongst Irishmen of all religious persuasions; to support the emancipation of the Catholics; and, finally, as the necessary, though not avowed, consequence of all this, to erect Ireland into a republic, independent of England. This paper, which they called, very appositely, the *Northern Star*, was conducted by my friend Samuel Neilson, who was unanimously chosen editor, and it could not be delivered into abler hands. It is, in truth, a most incomparable paper, and it rose, instantly, on its appearance, with a most rapid and extensive sale. The Catholics everywhere through Ireland (I mean the leading Catholics) were of course,

subscribers, and the *Northern Star* was one great means of effectually accomplishing the union of the two great sects, by the simple process of making their mutual sentiments better known to each other.

“It was determined by the people of Belfast to commemorate this year, the anniversary of the taking of the Bastile with great ceremony. For this purpose they planned a review of the Volunteers of the town and neighbourhood, to be followed by a grand procession, with emblematical devices, &c. They also determined to avail themselves of this opportunity to bring forward the Catholic question in force, and, in consequence, they resolved to publish two addresses, one to the people of France, and one to the people of Ireland. They gave instructions to Dr. Brennan to prepare the former, and the latter fell to my lot. Brennan executed his task admirably, and I made my address, for my part, as good as I knew how. We were invited to assist at the ceremony, and a great number of the leading members of the Catholic Committee determined to avail themselves of this opportunity to show their zeal for the success of the cause of liberty in France, as well as their respect and gratitude to their friends in Belfast. In consequence, a grand assembly took place on the 14th of July. After the review, the Volunteers and inhabitants, to the number of about 6,000 assembled in the Linen-Hall, and voted the address to the French people unanimously. The address to the people of Ireland followed, and, as it was directly and unequivocally in favour of the Catholic claims, we expected some opposition, but we were soon relieved from our anxiety, for the address passed, I may say, unanimously: a few ventured to oppose it indirectly, but their arguments were exposed and upset by the friends to Catholic emancipation, amongst the foremost of whom we had the pleasure to see several Dissenting clergymen of great popularity in that county.”

It will be seen that on the whole some progress was already made, and much more was soon to be expected in harmonising the Catholics and Dissenters, at least in the towns. A harder task remained—to make peace between them in the country. In the County Armagh, Peep-of-Day Boys were growing more ferocious, and of course, the Defenders more strongly organized for resistance. As before, the country gentlemen of that country, as ignorant and savage a race of squires as any in Ireland, took part with the aggressors. At an assizes, in 1791, the grand jury passed a resolution declaring that there had sprung up among the Papists “a passion for arming themselves, contrary to law”—and that this was matter of serious alarm, &c. As the usual pretext of the visits

of the Protestant Boys, "Wreckers," and other such banditti was to search for arms, such a resolution of the grand jury was neither more nor less than an invitation to continue such visits, and an assurance of protection to the "Wreckers." These troubles had now extended considerably into Tyrone, Down, and Monaghan Counties: and it stirs indignation even at this day to think of so many wretched families always kept in wakeful terror; lying down in fear and rising up with a heavy heart, or perhaps flying to the desolate mountains by the light of their own burning cabins.

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## CHAPTER XXVI.

1791—1792.

THE first clubs of "United Irishmen" were perfectly legal and constitutional in their structure, in their action, and in their aims; and so continued until the new organization was adopted in 1795. They consisted, both in Belfast and in Dublin, of Protestants chiefly, though many eminent Catholics joined them from the first. The first sentence of the constitution of the first club, at Belfast, is in these plain and moderate words:—

"1st. This society is constituted for the purpose of forwarding a brotherhood of affection, a communion of rights, and a union of power among Irishmen of every religious persuasion, and thereby to obtain a complete reform in the Legislature, founded on the principles of civil, political, and religious liberty."

Recollecting the hopeless character of the Irish Parliament of that day, one can scarcely pretend that it did not need "reform;" and as it most certainly would never reform itself, unless acted upon strongly by an external pressure, the idea seems to have been reasonable to endeavour to procure a union of power amongst Irishmen of every religious persuasion for that end. It was too clear also that a Parliament so constituted never would emancipate the Catholics—that is, never would tolerate a "brotherhood of affection" or a "communion of rights." It was therefore extremely natural for patriotic Protestants, who felt that Ireland was their country, and no longer a colony, but a nation, to take some means of assuring their fellow-countrymen, the Catholics, that they at least did not wish to perpetuate the degradation and exclusion of 3,000,000 of Irishmen; and thereupon to concert with them some common action for getting rid of this incurable oligarchy, which was the common enemy of them all. This was



the whole meaning and purpose of the society for more than three years; and its means and agencies were as fair, open, and rational as its objects. Addresses, namely, to the people of Ireland, and sometimes to reform clubs in England and in Scotland; articles in the newspapers, particularly in the *Northern Star*; and the promotion of an enlarged personal intercourse between the two sects who had lived in such deadly estrangement for two centuries. When they met one another face to face, worked together in clubs and meetings, visited one another's houses, fondled one another's children, there could not but grow up somewhat of that feeling of "Brotherhood" which is the first word of their constitution, the very cardinal principle of their society.

But this "Brotherhood"—what was it but the French *fraternité*! And their "Civil, political, and religious liberty" was a phrase which to the ear of Government sounded of *égalité* and the *Champ-de-Mars*. The whole of the programme given above, which looks to-day so just and sensible, was then felt to be reeking all over with "French principles." The Government therefore kept an eye steadily on these societies, as will soon appear in the sequel.

The Dublin club, which was formed in November of the same year, 1791, adopted the same declaration of principles, or constitution; but added a "test," which was nothing but a solemn engagement to be taken by each new member—"that he would persevere in endeavouring to form a brotherhood of affection amongst Irishmen of every religious persuasion," &c., and "that he would never inform on or give evidence against any member of this or similar societies for any act or expression of theirs done or made collectively or individually, in or out of this society, in pursuance of the spirit of this obligation,"—in other words, that if brotherhood amongst Irishmen, and the claim of civil and religious liberty should be made a crime by law (as it was but too likely) he would not inform upon his comrades for their complicity in those crimes.

From this time active correspondence was carried on. A strong address, written by Dr. Drennan, was sent by the Society of United Irishmen in Dublin to the delegates for promoting a reform in Scotland, in which this sentence occurs—one of many similar suggestions which were undoubtedly intended to lead the way to something more and better than a reform in Parliament. "If Government has a sincere regard for the safety of the constitution, let them coincide with the people in the speedy reform of its abuses, and not, by an obstinate adherence to them, drive that

people into *Republicanism*." There was another address from the same body, to "the Volunteers of Ireland" (for the wreck of that organization still existed in some places), adopted at a meeting of which Drennan was chairman, and Archibald Hamilton Rowan, secretary, and containing still stronger expressions. This document became in 1794 the subject of a prosecution for seditious libel against Rowan, the secretary, who was convicted by a carefully packed jury of his enemies, and sentenced to two years' imprisonment and a fine of five hundred pounds.

In the mean time, Parliamentary proceedings were going forward, much in their usual way. A Session opened on the 19th of January, 1792; but it is impossible now to take much interest in following the futile efforts of the opposition. Mr. Grattan, who carefully avoided the United Irishmen, could still at least abuse the Government in terms of eloquent scurrility, and did not fail to do so, in moving an amendment to the address:—"By this trade of Parliament the King was absolute: his will was signified by both Houses of Parliament, who were then as much an instrument in his hand as a bayonet in the hands of a regiment. Like a regiment they had their adjutant, who sent to the infirmary for the old, and to the brothel for the young; and men thus carted as it were into that House to vote for the minister, were called the representatives of the people."

The country, as well as the ministers, had heard all this abuse before, and had begun almost to regard it as a discharge of blank cartridge. Yet the Session is in some measure notable for a trifling Catholic relief measure, introduced by Sir Hercules Langrishe, and rather unexpectedly supported by the Government. In fact, it was evident to the English Government that the Catholics were becoming a real element for good or for evil in this Irish nation: they had refused to be extirpated; refused to be brutalized by ignorance, for they would fly to the ends of the earth for education; they had so well profited also by the petty and grudging relaxations already granted them, that a large proportion of them were rich and influential; they were, in short, a power to be conciliated, if that could be cheaply done, and so detached from "French principles" and made grateful to the Government. It is not, therefore, surprising to find Mr. Secretary Hobart (of course by orders from England) seconding the motion of Langrishe for leave to bring in this bill. Sir Hercules thus defines the objects of his bill for the Catholics:—

1st. He would give them the practice and profession of the law, as a reasonable provision, and application of their talents to their own country.

2ndly. He would restore to them education, entire and unrestrained, because a state of ignorance was a state of barbarity. That would be accomplished by taking off the necessity for a licence, as enjoined by the act of 1782.

3rdly. He would draw closer the bonds of intercourse and affection, by allowing intermarriage, repealing that cruel Statute which served to betray female credulity, and bastardize the children of a virtuous mother.

4thly. He would remove those obstructions to arts and manufactures, that limited the number of apprentices, which were so necessary to assist and promote trade. He then moved, "That leave be given to bring in a bill for removing certain restraints and disabilities under which his Majesty's Roman Catholic subjects labour, from Statutes at present in force."

This bill was prepared and concerted by its author in concert with Edmund Burke; and was perhaps as liberal in its provisions as any bill which could at that moment be presented with any chance of success; yet, meagre as it was, it called forth a storm of bigoted and brutal opposition. The General Committee of the Catholics—Edward Byrne, Esq., in the chair—held a meeting and passed some resolutions, which it is somewhat humiliating to read, but which were certainly politic in the circumstances. Here is the document:—

*Dublin, February 4th, 1792.*

"GENERAL COMMITTEE OF ROMAN CATHOLICS. EDWARD BYRNE, Esq., in the chair.

"*Resolved*, That this committee has been informed, that reports have been circulated, that the application of the Catholics for relief, extends to *unlimited and total emancipation*; and that attempts have been made, wickedly and falsely, to instil into the minds of the Protestants of this kingdom an opinion, that our applications were preferred in a tone of menace.

"*Resolved*, That several Protestant gentlemen have expressed great satisfaction on being individually informed of the real extent and respectful manner of the applications for relief; have assured us, that nothing could have excited jealousy, or apparent opposition to us, from our Protestant countrymen, but the above-mentioned misapprehensions.

"*Resolved*, That we therefore deem it necessary to declare, that the whole of our late applications, whether to his Majesty's ministers, to men in power, or to private members of the Legislature as well as our intended petition, neither did, nor does



contain any thing, or extend further, either in substance or in principle, than the four following objects :—

“ 1st. Admission to the profession and practice of the law.

“ 2nd. Capacity to serve in county magistracies.

“ 3rd. A right to be summoned, and to serve on grand and petty juries.

“ 4th. The right of voting in counties *only for Protestant Members of Parliament* ; in such a manner, however, as that a Roman Catholic freeholder should not vote, unless he either rented and cultivated a farm of twenty pounds per annum, *in addition* to his forty shillings freehold ; or else possessed a freehold to the amount of twenty pounds a-year.”

That is to say, the Catholic Committee found itself obliged earnestly to disavow the sacrilegious thought of being allowed to vote on the same qualification as the Protestant forty-shilling freeholders ; disclaimed with horror the idea of voting for Catholic Members of Parliament ; and publicly declared to Parliament and to all mankind that they did not presume to aspire to “total emancipation.” But humble and scanty as their claim was, it was more than the Langrishe bill proposed to grant them. There was no provision in it for admitting them to the elective franchise upon any terms whatever. The committee prepared a petition, which was signed by some of the most respectable mercantile men of Dublin, and while the bill was in progress, the petition was presented by Mr. Egan. This gave rise to a conversation on the following Monday (20th February). On that day Mr. David La Touche moved, that the petition of the Roman Catholic Committee, presented to the House on the preceding Saturday, should be read by the clerk ; it was read, and he then moved, that it should be rejected. The motion was seconded by Mr. Ogle. The greater part of the House was very violent for the rejection of the petition. Some few, who were against the prayer of the petition, objected to the harsh measure of rejection. Several of the opposition members supported Mr. La Touche's motion. Even Mr. G. Ponsonby, on this occasion voted against his friend Mr. Grattan. The Solicitor-General attempted to soften the refusal to the Catholics by moving, that the prayer of the petition, as far as it related to a participation of the elective franchise should not then be complied with. The Attorney-General and some other staunch supporters of Government had spoken similar language ; that they hoped quickly to see all religious distinctions and restrictions done away, but that the fulness of time was not yet come. Mr. Forbes, the Hon. F.

Hutchinson, Colonel (now Lord) Hutchinson, Mr. Smith, Mr. Hardy, and Mr. Grattan spoke strongly against the motion and in favour of admitting the Catholics to a share in the elective franchise. Much virulent abuse was heaped upon that part of the body of Roman Catholics which was supposed to be represented by the Catholic Committee. At a very late hour the House divided, 208 for rejecting the petition, and 23 only against it. Then Mr. La Touche moved, that the petition from the society of the United Irishmen of Belfast, should be also rejected; and the question being put was carried with two or three negatives.

The bill itself passed quietly through the committee; and on the third reading, Sir Hercules Langrishe congratulated the country on the growth of the spirit of liberality. The growth was slow, and the liberality was rather narrow: nor would this measure deserve mention—as it was soon superseded by a much larger one—but to show the very humble and unpretending position taken by the only body then representing the Catholics. It must be remembered, too, that war in Europe was by this time imminent and certain; and though England had not yet formally joined the coalition against France, that event was becoming daily more inevitable; and the Government was very desirous, as usual in such moments of danger, to send a message of peace to Ireland, and to show the three millions of Catholics that their real friends were, not those “fraternal” United Irishmen, but Mr. Pitt and the Earl of Westmoreland.

Upon all other questions, the state of parties in Parliament continued nearly the same that it had been for many years; that is, the Castle was always certain of more than a two-thirds majority. Mr. G. Ponsonby, after an elaborate argument, moved for leave to bring in a bill repealing every law which prohibited a trade from Ireland with the countries lying eastward of the Cape of Good Hope; which was lost by 156 votes against 70. On the same day, Mr. Forbes, faithful to his special mission, brought forward his regular Place and Pension bills; they were both put off to a distant day, without a division, though not without some debate. Indeed these attacks on the places and pensions were now more intolerable to the Government and its supporters than ever before; and they were louder than ever in their reprobation of such Jacobin movements, as a manifest attempt to diminish the royal prerogative and bring in French principles.

A singular motion was made this Session, which merits notice as an illustration of the shameless and desperate corruption of the times. Mr. Browne moved to bring in a bill to repeal an act

of the last Session touching the "weighing of butter, hides, and tallow" in the city of Cork, and the appointment of a weighmaster in that city. This office had long been in the gift of the corporation of the city, and the corporation had always found one weighmaster more than enough; but the Government, in pursuance, said Mr. Browne, of their settled policy of "creating influence," had taken the appointment, split it into three parts, and bestowed on *three Members of Parliament*. Mr. Grattan seconded the motion. It was opposed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the express ground that it was an "insult to the Crown," and therefore a manifest piece of French democracy and infidelity, intended to overthrow the throne and the altar. There was a sharp debate, in which "Patriots" said many cutting things; and at half-past two in the morning the motion was negatived without a division. Is it wonderful that the minds of honest people were now altogether turned away from such a Parliament? It was prorogued on the 18th of April. The Speaker, in his address to the Viceroy, speaks of one gratifying fact, "the extension of trade, agriculture, and manufactures, which has with a rapid and uninterrupted progress raised this kingdom to a state of prosperity and wealth never before experienced in it." But at the same time he let his excellency know, that this prosperity "would soon cease" if they did not carefully cherish the blessed constitution in Church and State. "Its preservation, therefore," he continued, "must ever be the great object of their care, and there is no principle on which it is founded so essential to its preservation, nor more justly dear to their patriotic and loyal feelings, than that which has settled the throne of these realms on his Majesty's illustrious house; on it, and on the provisions for securing a Protestant Parliament depends the Protestant Ascendancy, and with it the continuance of the many blessings we now enjoy."

It appears from the studied allusions to the Protestant Ascendancy, which in the speech of the Speaker were evidently aimed against the petition of the Catholics for a participation in the elective franchise, that Mr. Foster wished to raise a strong and general opposition to that measure throughout the country: but the speech of the Lord Lieutenant imported that the Government, moved by the impulse of the British councils, was disposed rather to extend than contract the indulgences to the Roman Catholics. His Majesty approved of their wisdom in the liberal indulgences that had been granted, but suggested no apprehensions of danger to the Protestant interest, which had been almost a matter of



course in all Viceregal speeches, to the great comfort of the "Ascendency."

This year was a season of most vehement agitation and discussion upon the Catholic claims. That body, was, of course, greatly dissatisfied with the miserable measure of relief granted, by the shabby bill of Sir Hercules Langrishe. Mr. Simon Butler, chairman of the Dublin Society of United Irishmen, published, by order of that society, a "Digest of the Popery Laws," bringing into one view the whole body of penalties and disabilities to which Catholics still remained subject after all the small and nibbling attempts or pretences of relief. The pamphlet thus truly sums up the actual condition of the Catholics at that moment, after Sir Hercules Langrishe's Act:—

"Such is the situation of three millions of good and faithful subjects in their native land! Excluded from every trust, power, or emolument of the State, civil or military; excluded from all the benefits of the constitution in all its parts; excluded from all corporate rights and immunities; expelled from grand juries, restrained in petit juries; excluded from every direction, from every trust, from every incorporated society, from every establishment, occasional or fixed, instituted for public defence, public police, public morals, or public convenience; from the bench, from the bank, from the exchange, from the university, from the college of physicians: from what are they not excluded? There is no institution which the wit of man has invented or the progress of society produced, which private charity or public munificence has founded for the advancement of education, learning, and good arts, for the permanent relief of age, infirmity, or misfortune, from the superintendence of which, and in all cases where common charity would permit, from the enjoyment of which the Legislature has not taken care to exclude the Catholics of Ireland. Such is the state which the corporation of Dublin have thought proper to assert, 'differs in no respect from that of the Protestants, save only in the exercise of political power;' and the host of grand juries consider 'as essential to the existence of the constitution, to the permanency of the connection with England, and the continuation of the throne in his Majesty's royal house.' A greater libel on the constitution, the connection, or the succession, could not be pronounced, nor one more pregnant with dangerous and destructive consequences, than this, which asserts, that they are only to be maintained and continued by the slavery and oppression of three millions of good and loyal subjects."

At the same time the General Committee prepared a "Decla-

ration," of Catholic tenets on certain points with regard to which people of that creed had long been wantonly belied: such as keeping of faith with heretics; the alleged pretension of the Pope to absolve subjects from their allegiance; of clergymen to dispense them from oaths, and the like. All these alleged doctrines the Declaration indignantly and contemptuously denied; and it was signed universally throughout Ireland by clergy and laity. To the Declaration was added a republication of the well-known "Answers of six Catholic Universities abroad to the queries which had been propounded to them, at the request of Mr. Pitt, three years before, on behalf of the English Catholics." The universities were those of Paris, Louvain, Alcala, Douay, Salamanca, and Valladolid. The queries and the answers form a highly important document for the history of the time. We give the queries in full, and an extract or two from the answers—only premising that Mr. Pitt sought these declarations, not to satisfy his own mind, because he was too well informed to need this, but only to stop the mouths of benighted country gentlemen and greedy Ascendency politicians, who would be sure to bawl out against the concessions to Catholics which he in that perilous time and for political reasons was determined to grant.

#### THE QUERIES.

1. Has the Pope, or cardinals, or any body of men, or any individual of the Church of Rome, any civil authority, power, jurisdiction, or pre-eminence whatsoever, within the realm of England?

2. Can the Pope or cardinals, or any body of men, or any individual of the Church of Rome, absolve or dispense his Majesty's subjects, from their oath of allegiance, upon any pretext whatsoever?

3. Is there any principle in the tenets of the Catholic faith, by which Catholics are justified in not keeping faith with heretics, or other persons differing from them in religious opinions, in any transaction, either of a public or a private nature?

And the six universities responded unanimously and simultaneously in the negative upon all the three points. The answers are all exceedingly distinct and categorical. That of the university of Alcala, in Spain, may serve as a specimen:—

"To the first question it is answered—That none of the persons mentioned in the proposed question, either individually, or collectively in council assembled, have any right in civil matters: but that all civil power, jurisdiction, and pre-eminence are derived from inheritance, election, the consent of the people, and other such titles of that nature.

"To the second it is answered, in like manner—That none of the persons above-mentioned have a power to absolve the subjects of his Britannic majesty from their oaths of allegiance.

"To the third question it is answered—That the doctrine which would exempt Catholics from the obligation of keeping faith with heretics, or with any other persons who dissent from them in matters of religion, instead of being an article of Catholic faith, is entirely repugnant to its tenets.

"Signed in the usual form. March 17th, 1789."

The learned doctors of some of these universities could not refrain, while they gave their answers, from administering a rebuke to those who asked such questions. For instance, the Faculty of Divinity at Louvain, "Having been requested to give an opinion upon the questions above stated, does it with readiness—but is struck with astonishment that such questions should, at the end of this 18th century, be proposed to any learned body, by inhabitants of a kingdom [England] that glories in the talents and discernment of its natives."

The publication of the Catholic Declaration, with the opinions of the universities, was very far indeed from satisfying the theologians of the Protestant interest; especially as there came forth at the same time the detailed plan for electing delegates this year to the Convention of Catholics which had already been decided upon. These Papists were evidently preparing to rise a little out of their abject humility. The Protestant theologians thought themselves too acute to be imposed upon by all those fine protestations of Papists, and professions made by Popish universities. Since when, they desired to know, was it held that the declaration of persons charged with systematic perfidy—that they were persons who keep faith—was held to be evidence of their good character? They also cited examples of the Pope having actually, in former ages, absolved, or attempted to absolve subjects from their allegiance. Besides, was it not well-known that those universities in France and Spain were full of Popish doctors, who would desire nothing better than to delude the minds of unsuspecting Irish Protestants, and so pave the way for the overthrow of the Protestant Church, resumption of forfeited estates, and fulfilment of Pastorini's prophecies! It seems to have been more especially the "plan" for election of delegates to the Catholic Convention that excited the alarm and wrath of the "Ascendancy."

Immediately on the appearance of this plan, a general outcry was raised against it; sedition, tumult, conspiracy, and treason, were echoed from county to county, from grand jury to grand jury. Some Legislators, high in the confidence of their sovereign,



and armed with the influence of station and office, presided at those meetings, and were foremost in arraigning measures, upon the merits of which in another place and in another function they were finally to determine.

The exaggerated and alarming language of most of the grand juries imported, that the Catholics of Ireland were on the eve of a general insurrection, ready to hurl the King from his throne, and tear the whole frame of the constitution to pieces.

The Leitrim grand jury denominated the plan "An inflammatory and dangerous publication," and stated, "that they felt it necessary to come forward at that period to declare, that they were ready to support, with their lives and fortunes, their present most valuable constitution in Church and State; and that they would resist, to the utmost of their power, the attempts of any body of men, however numerous, who should presume to threaten innovation in either."

The grand jury of the county of Cork denominated the plan "An unconstitutional proceeding of the most alarming, dangerous, and seditious tendency; an attempt to overawe Parliament;" they stated their determination to "protect and defend, with their lives and property, the present constitution in Church and State." That of Roscommon, after the usual epithets of "alarming, dangerous, and seditious," asserted that the plan called upon the whole body of the Roman Catholics of Ireland to associate themselves in the metropolis of that kingdom, upon the model of the national assembly of France, which had already plunged that devoted country into a state of anarchy and tumult unexampled in any civilized nation: they stated it to be "an attempt to overawe Parliament;" they mentioned their serious and sensible alarms for the existence of their present happy establishment in Church and State; and their determination, "at the hazard of every thing dear to them, to uphold and maintain the Protestant interest of Ireland."

The grand jury of Sligo *Resolved*, "That they would, at all times, and by every constitutional means in their power, resist and oppose every attempt then making, or thereafter to be made, by the Roman Catholics, to obtain their elective franchise, or any participation in the Government of the country." And that of Donegal declared, that though "they regarded the Catholics with tenderness, they would maintain, at the hazard of every thing dear to them, the Protestant interest of Ireland."

The grand jury of Fermanagh, professing also "the warmest attachment to their Roman Catholic brethren," felt it, however, necessary to come forward at that period to declare, that they

were "ready with their lives and fortunes to support their present invaluable constitution in Church and State." And that of the County of Derry, after expressing their apprehensions lest that proceeding "might lead to the formation of a hierarchy (consisting partly of laity) which would destroy the Protestant Ascendancy, the freedom of the elective franchise, and the established constitution of this country," tendered their lives and fortunes to support the happy constitution as established at the revolution of 1688. A very great majority of the leading signatures affixed to those resolutions, were those of men either high in the Government of the country, or enjoying lucrative places under it, or possessing extensive borough interest.

The grand jury of the County of Louth, with the Speaker of the House of Commons at their head, declared, "that the allowing to Roman Catholics the right of voting for Members to serve in Parliament, or admitting them to any participation in the Government of the kingdom, was incompatible with the safety of the Protestant Establishment, the continuance of the succession to the Crown in the illustrious House of Hanover, and finally tended to shake, if not destroy, their connection with Great Britain, on the continuance and inseparability of which depended the happiness and prosperity of that kingdom; that they would oppose every attempt towards such a dangerous innovation, and that they would support with their lives and fortunes the present constitution, and the settlement of the throne on his Majesty's Protestant House." The freeholders of the County of Limerick charged the Catholic Committee with an intention to overawe the Legislature, to force a repeal of the Penal Laws, and to create a Popish democracy for their Government and direction in pursuit of whatever objects might be holden out to them by turbulent and seditious men. They then instructed their representatives in Parliament, "at all events, to oppose any proposition which might be made for extending to Catholics the right of elective franchise:" at this meeting the Chancellor was present. The Corporation of Dublin in strong terms denied the competency of Parliament to extend the right of franchise to the Catholics, which they called "alienating their most valuable inheritance;" and roundly asserted against the fact, that "the last Session of Parliament left the Roman Catholics in no wise different from their Protestant fellow-subjects, save only in the exercise of political power."

Some of the grand juries indignantly rejected the proposals made to them of coming to any resolutions injurious to their Catholic brethren. Agents had been employed to tamper with

every grand jury that met during the summer assizes. Nothing could tend more directly than this measure of pre-engaging the sentiments of the country against three millions of its inhabitants, to raise and foment discord and disunion between Protestants and Catholics. Counter-resolutions, answers and replies, addresses and protestations, were published and circulated in the public papers from some grand jurymen, and from many different bodies of Catholics; several bold and severe publications appeared during the course of the summer, not only from individuals of the Catholic body, but from the friends of their cause amongst the Protestants. It is scarcely questionable but that the virulent and acrimonious opposition raised against the Catholic petition for a very limited participation in the elective franchise, enlivened the sense of their grievances, opened their views, and united their energies into a common effort to procure a general repeal of the whole Penal Code.

The General Committee of the Catholics, and the United Irish Society were unavoidably coming closer together. In a debate of the committee, Mr. Keogh, a gentleman of great manliness of character as well as power of intellect, fairly said that for a late publication (*Digest of the Popery Laws*), the United Irishmen and their respected chairman, Mr. Simon Butler, demanded their warmest gratitude.\*

At that time the United Irish Society was the only association of any kind which even admitted a Catholic into its ranks. No Catholic could be in the Whig Club; nor would it even permit the Catholic question to be agitated there. This point was decided in a singular debate of the Whig Club in November, 1792, when Mr. Huband, having proposed that the sense of the

\* Mr. Plowden, in an apologetic sort of way, says upon this occasion, "It was natural for persons staggering under oppression, cordially to grasp every hand that held out relief." Nothing can be more provoking than the affectation of "loyalty" to the House of Hanover which certain Catholic writers, previous to emancipation, thought it needful to make. Plowden, in another place, speaking of the same publication made by the United Irishmen, says:—"It would be unfair, if the historian were to represent the transactions of a particular period from consequences that appeared at a distant interval of time, and the subsequent fate of many of the actors in the scenes. It is his duty faithfully to represent them as they really passed at the time. Merit and demerit can only attach from previous or co-existing circumstances; not from the posthumous issue engendered in the womb of time by future base and unavowed connections. It was not because an individual was guilty of treason in the year 1798, that every previous act or transaction in which that individual was concerned for the twenty, ten, or five preceding years, was affected with the venom of his latter crime."



meeting should be taken upon the course to be pursued by Members with respect to Catholic claims—

Some gentlemen decidedly asserted, that they did not think the Catholic question ought to be mentioned or discussed in the Whig Club. They were averse to their having any concern in it, and one went so far as to say, that if it were admitted to be debated in that society, he would with his own hand strike his name out of the list of the members.

On which Mr. A. Ham. Rowan observed, that he would be as tenacious as any other gentleman, of remaining in any society where improper subjects were proposed for discussion; but that for his part, he would not hesitate to strip off his Whig Club uniform, and throw it to the waiter, if the Catholic question were deemed an unfit subject for their discussion.

Mr. W. Brown called the attention of gentlemen to the purpose of their association. They placed themselves in the front of the public cause, to further it, not to stop its further progress; the second principle of their declaration was, a solemn engagement to support the rights of the people, &c. Who, said he, are the people? I dare any gentleman to name the people of Ireland without including the Roman Catholics. What? is it a question, —shall three millions of Irishmen continue slaves or obtain their freedom! Is it a question to be deserted by men professing patriotism, professing to redress the public oppression, pledged to stand together in defence of their country's liberties? No; it is not.

To desert the cause of the Catholics, would be to desert the principles of their institution, it would be to deserve the calumny thrown against them by their enemies, that they were an opposition struggling for power, not a band of "Patriots" for the public weal; it would rob their names of honour, their rank and wealth of consequence, and it would finally sink them from a station of political importance, down to the obscurity and insignificance of an interested and impotent party.

On the question being put, whether the Catholic question should be taken into consideration or not on Wednesday fortnight, it was negatived on a division by thirteen.

The long-talked-of Convention of the Catholics was actually held in December of this year: the elections of delegates had been regularly and quietly held, in pursuance of the "plan," and the first meeting of the delegates assembled at Tailors' Hall, Dublin, on the 2nd of December, 1792; two hundred delegates being present.

While this peaceable Convention was holding its meetings,

another phenomenon appeared in Dublin, which gave still greater uneasiness both to the "Ascendancy" and to the Castle. The National Guard, a new military body, was arrayed and disciplined in Dublin. They wore green uniforms, with buttons engraved with a harp, under a cap of liberty, instead of a crown. Their leaders were A. H. Rowan, and James Napper Tandy; they affected to address each other by the appellation of citizen, in imitation of the French. This corps was in high favour with the populace, and was always cordially greeted as they appeared in the street or on parade. Government really felt alarm; a general insurrection was apprehended: they pretended to have information of the particular nights fixed for that purpose. The magistrates, by order of Government, patrolled the streets with bodies of horse each night. It was given out from the Castle, that the Custom-House, the Post-Office, and the Jail, were the first places to be attacked; and that the signal for rising was to have been the pulling down of the statue of King William in College Green with ropes. Many other false rumours of conspiracies and assassinations were set afloat. In the mean while the National Guards, and all the Volunteer corps of Dublin, were summoned to assemble on Sunday, the 9th of December, 1792, to celebrate the victory of the French, and the triumph of universal liberty. The summons began with an affectation of Gallicism, "*Citizen Soldier*." However, the meeting was prevented; and Government issued a proclamation, on the 8th of December, against their assembling. The National Guards did not assemble; and the only persons who appeared on parade were, A. H. Rowan, J. N. Tandy, and Carey, the printer.

This Catholic Convention, and this National Guard appeared dangerous in the eyes of Fitzgibbon (now Earl of Clare)—the object of his life was the legislative union; and he foresaw that unless conventions of delegates and associations of armed citizens were prohibited and prevented by law, that great measure never could be carried. Accordingly his busy brain was already busy in maturing a series of measures to deprive all Irishmen, whether Protestant or Catholic, of every means of expressing their wishes by delegates, and every means of asserting their rights by arms.

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## CHAPTER XXVII

1792—1793

THE Catholic Convention met under rather favourable auspices. In the course of the summer a reconciliation or coalition had been generally effected between the committee and several of the sixty-four addressers, including bishops. Convinced that his Majesty's ministers in England were disposed to favour their pretensions, it was found political in the body to act in concert; and to this accommodating disposition and desire of internal union, is to be attributed the moderation of the public acts of that Convention. They framed a petition to the King, which was a firm though modest representation of their grievances; it was signed by Dr. Troy and Dr. Moylan, on behalf of themselves and the other Roman Catholic prelates and clergy of Ireland, and by the several delegates for the different districts which they respectfully represented. They then proceeded to choose five delegates to present it to his Majesty; the choice fell upon Sir Thomas French, Mr. Byrne, Mr. Keogh, Mr. Devereux, and Mr. Bellew. These gentlemen went by short seas; in their road to Donaghadee they passed through Belfast in the morning, and some of the most respectable inhabitants waited upon them at the Donegal Arms, where they remained about two hours; upon their departure, the populace took their horses from their carriages, and dragged them through the town amidst the liveliest shouts of joy and wishes for their success.\* The delegates returned these expressions of affection and sympathy, by the most grateful acknowledgements and assurances of their determination to maintain that union which formed the strength of Ireland. On the 2nd of January, 1793, the gentlemen delegated by the Catholics of Ireland, attended the levee at St. James's, were introduced to his Majesty by Mr. Dundas, Secretary of State for the Home Department, and had the

\* Of this extraordinary demonstration, never exemplified before, and never imitated since, Wolfe Tone says:—"Whatever effect it might have on the negotiation in England, it certainly tended to raise and confirm the hopes of the Catholics at home. 'Let our delegates,' said they, 'if they are refused, return by the same route.' To those who look beyond the surface it was an interesting spectacle, and pregnant with material consequences, to see the Dissenter of the North drawing, with his own hands, the Catholic of the South in triumph, through what may be denominated the capital of Presbyterianism. However repugnant it might be to the wishes of the British minister, it was a wholesome suggestion to his prudence, and when he scanned the whole business in his mind, was probably not dismissed from his contemplation."



honour of presenting their humble petition to his Majesty, who was pleased most graciously to receive it.

His Majesty had his reasons. Fortunately for the Catholics, England was at this moment in a condition of extreme difficulty and peril. She was already engaged in the coalition of European powers to crush the new-born Hercules of France. The French, under Dumouriez, had happily driven back the Prussian invaders from the passes of the Argonne. Dumouriez had followed up his successes, entered Belgium and gained over the Austrians the glorious victory of Jemappes. The King of France had already been removed from his throne to the Temple prison; and on the very day when the King of England was so graciously receiving the Catholic delegates, that unhappy French monarch was awaiting his trial, sentence, and execution at the hands of his people; all of which took place a few days afterwards. This event was to be the signal for England to enter actively into the war. Ever since August of last year, the British Court had refused all communication with M. Chauvelin, the French envoy, and he was finally dismissed from England immediately on the arrival of news of King Louis's execution. War, therefore, was now inevitable, and war on such a scale and against such a foe as would tax the utmost energies and resources of Great Britain. It was determined accordingly to endeavour to purchase the three millions of Irish Catholics, who make such excellent recruiting material; so that instead of having Irish brigades against them, they might have Irish regiments for them. It was also a part of this policy to detach the Catholics from the United Irishmen, to disgust them with "French principles," and predispose them to look favourably on the Legislative Union. The delegates returned from London, in the complacent language of Mr. Plowden:—"the welcome heralds of the benign countenance and reception they had received from the father of his people."

On the 10th of January, 1792, the Irish Parliament met. The speech from the throne recommended attention to the claims of the Catholics. The House of Lords very early in the Session appointed a secret committee to inquire into the state of the nation, with special reference to the troubles in the North between Peep-of-Day Boys and Defenders. The Secret Committee made a most extraordinary report; in which they appear to find no criminal rioters in the North except the poor Defenders. "All, so far as the committee could discover, of the Roman Catholic persuasion, poor ignorant, labouring men, sworn to secrecy, and impressed with an opinion that they were assisting the Catholic cause." The committee further endeavoured to connect in some

way with those agrarian disturbers, the political demonstrations of the United Irishmen at Belfast and other towns. They report with high indignation :—

“That an unusual ferment had for some months past disturbed several parts of the North, particularly the town of Belfast and the county of Antrim ; it was kept up and encouraged by seditious papers and pamphlets of the most dangerous tendency, printed at very cheap and inconsiderable rates in Dublin and Belfast, which issued almost daily from certain societies of men or clubs in both those places, calling themselves committees under various descriptions, and carrying on a constant correspondence with each other. These publications were circulated amongst the people with the utmost industry, and appeared to be calculated to defame the Government and Parliament, and to render the people dissatisfied with their condition and with their laws. *The conduct of the French was shamefully extolled*, and recommended to the public view as an example for imitation ; hopes and expectations had been held up of their assistance by a descent upon that kingdom, and prayers had been offered up at Belfast from the pulpit, for the success of their arms, in the presence of military associations, which had been newly-levied and arrayed in that town. A body of men associated themselves in Dublin, under the title of the First National Battalion : their uniform was copied from the French, green turned up with white, white waistcoats and striped trousers, gilt buttons, impressed with a harp and letters importing ‘First National Battalion,’ no crown, but a device over the harp of a cap of liberty upon a pike ; two pattern coats had been left at two shops in Dublin. Several bodies of men had been collected in different parts of the North, armed and disciplined under officers chosen by themselves, and composed mostly of the lowest classes of the people. These bodies were daily increasing in numbers and force, they had exerted their best endeavours to procure military men of experience to act as their officers, some of them having expressly stated, that there were men enough to be had, but that officers were what they wanted. Stands of arms and gunpowder to a very large amount, much above the common consumption, had been sent within the last few months to Belfast and Newry, and orders given for a much greater quantity, which it appeared could be wanted only for military operations. At Belfast, bodies of men in arms were drilled and exercised for several hours almost every night by candle-light, and attempts had been made to seduce the soldiery, which, much to the honour of the King’s forces, had proved ineffectual. The declared object of these military bodies was to procure a reform of Parliament ;

but the obvious intention of most of them appeared to be to overawe the Parliament and the Government, and to dictate to both. The committee forbore mentioning the names of several persons, lest it should in any manner affect any criminal prosecution, or involve the personal safety of any man who had come forward to give them information. The result of their inquiries was, that in their opinion it was incompatible with the public safety and tranquillity of that kingdom, to permit bodies of men in arms to assemble when they pleased without any legal authority : and that the existence of a self-created representative body of any description of the King's subjects, taking upon itself the government of them, and levying taxes *or subscriptions*," &c., ought not to be permitted.

It is very easy to see the object of this report : it was simply Lord Clare's method of preparing the way for his coercion acts, which were to apply not only to the Defenders but also to the United Irishmen and to the Catholic Convention itself.

The policy adopted towards the Catholics at that time took the form which it has worn ever since, and which may be described in four words—to conciliate the rich and to coerce the poor. This extravagant report of the Lords' Committee, giving so overcharged a picture of the insurrectionary spirit of the North, was in order to create "alarm among the better classes," the uniform preparative for coercion and oppression in Ireland.

On the 31st of January the House of Commons took into consideration a proclamation of the Lord Lieutenant and Privy Council, dated the 8th of December last, for dispersing all *unlawful assemblies* : and Lord Headfort moved a vote of thanks to the Viceroy for this proclamation "to preserve domestic tranquillity from those whose declared objects were *tumult, disaffection, and sedition*." This occasioned some debate ; but the address passed without a division. This proceeding of the House proves that the great Government majority in the House, as well as the Lords, were in full concurrence with the Government in favour of coercion. It is further interesting from an incident which befell at the close of the debate—Lord Edward Fitzgerald, in a very vehement tone, declared, "I give my most hearty disapprobation to that address, for I do think that the Lord Lieutenant and the majority of this House, are the worst subjects the King has." A loud cry of "to the bar," and "take down his words," immediately echoed from every part of the House. The House was cleared in an instant, and strangers were not re-admitted for nearly three hours.

He was admitted to explain himself, and on his explaining, the House



"*Resolved, nem. con.*, That the excuse offered by the Right Hon. Edward Fitzgerald, commonly called Lord Edward Fitzgerald, for the said words so spoken, is unsatisfactory and insufficient:" and he was ordered to attend at the bar on the next day, when his apology was received, though not without a division upon its sufficiency: for receiving it, 135; against it, 66.—(12 *Par. Deb.*, p. 82.)

Mr. Grattan also expressed himself with some indignation in this debate, on the classing up the remnant of his old Volunteers along with such seditious company as United Irishmen and National Guards: for Mr. Secretary Hobart had read to the House, as part of the outrageous proceedings which had dictated the strong measure of the proclamation, a certain summons of the corps of goldsmiths, calling on the delegates of that corps to assemble and celebrate the retreat of the Duke of Brunswick (from Valmy), and the French victory in the Low Countries (Jemappes). Mr. Grattan was soon to learn that in the application of the new laws which were now to be enacted the remnant of the classic old Volunteers was to be held no more sacred than the most Republican United Irish Club, or the poorest lodge of Defenders.

On the 1st of February the French Republic declared war against England (which was now known to be the very head and heart of the coalition against France): and on the 14th of that month the Irish Secretary, Mr. Hobart, presented a petition from some Catholics, and described at length the measure which he intended to introduce. A few days after, he brought in his "Relief Bill," and had it read a first time. It was opposed by Mr. Ogle, and by the famous Dr. Duigenan. Throughout its passage it was supported by the Court party, because it was a Court measure; and Mr. Grattan, Mr. Curran, and most of the opposition supported it, of course. Dr. Duigenan raked up several times all the most hideous accusations that ever bigotry had invented and ignorance believed against Papists, in order to oppose the grant of any relief to such miscreants. On the second reading, Mr. G. Ponsonby and Mr. La Touche spoke against it. When the bill was in committee, Mr. George Knox, in a liberal and able speech moved, that the committee might be empowered to receive a clause to admit Roman Catholics to sit and vote in the House of Commons. Major Doyle seconded the motion, which was strongly supported by Mr. Daly, Colonel Hutchinson, Mr. M. Smith, Mr. John O'Neil, Mr. Hardy, and some other gentlemen friendly to Catholic emancipation; it was, however, rejected upon a division by 163 against 69.

The bill finally passed both Houses and received the royal

assent, on the 9th of April. This Act, which was received with so much gratitude, and was extolled as such a triumph of liberality, enables Catholics to vote for Members of Parliament—that is, for Protestant Members and none other—admits them to the bar, that is, the outer bar—all the honours and high places of the profession being reserved for Protestants—enables them to vote for municipal officers—that is, Protestant officers exclusively—permits them to possess arms, provided they possess a certain freehold and personal estate, and take certain oaths, neither of which conditions applied to Protestants; allows them to serve on juries, but not to sit on parish vestries; admits them, under certain restrictions, to hold military and naval commissions, certain of the higher grades being excepted—and it subjects the exercise of most of these new privileges to the taking of a most insulting and humiliating oath. As this Act (33 Geo. III., c. 21.) settled for thirty-six years the whole condition and relations of the Catholics, it is here given in full:—

“ 33 Geo. III., c. xxi.

*“An Act for the Relief of his Majesty's Popish or Roman Catholic Subjects of Ireland.*

“ *Whereas*, various acts of Parliament have been passed, imposing on his Majesty's subjects professing the Roman Catholic religion, many restraints and disabilities, to which other subjects of this realm are not liable; and from the peaceable and loyal demeanour of his Majesty's Popish or Roman Catholic subjects, it is fit that such restraints and disabilities shall be discontinued: *Be it therefore enacted*, by the King's most excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords, spiritual and temporal, and Commons in this present Parliament assembled. and by the authority of the same, That his Majesty's subjects being Papists, or persons professing the Popish or Roman Catholic religion, or married to Papists or persons professing the Popish or Roman Catholic religion, or educating any of their children in that religion, shall not be liable or subject to any penalties, forfeitures, disabilities, or incapacities, or to any laws for the limitation, charging, or discovering of their estates and property, real or personal, or touching the acquiring of property or securities affecting property; save such as his Majesty's subjects of the Protestant religion are liable and subject to; and that such parts of all oaths as are required to be taken by persons in order to qualify themselves for voting at elections of Members to serve in Parliament; and also such parts of all oaths required to be taken by persons voting at elections for Members to serve in Parliament,

as import to deny that the person taking the same is a Papist or married to a Papist, or educates his children in the Popish religion, shall not hereafter be required to be taken by any voter, but shall be omitted by the person administering the same; and that it shall not be necessary, in order to entitle a Papist, or person professing the Popish or Roman Catholic religion to vote at an election of Members to serve in Parliament, that he should at, or previous to his voting, take the oaths of allegiance and abjuration, any Statute now in force to the contrary of any of the said matters in any wise notwithstanding.

“II. *Provided always, and be it further enacted*, That all Papists or persons professing the Popish or Roman Catholic religion, who may claim to have a right of voting for Members to serve in Parliament, or of voting for magistrates in any city, town corporate, or borough, within this kingdom, be hereby required to perform all qualifications, registries, and other requisites, which are now required of his Majesty's Protestant subjects, in like cases, by any law or laws now of force in this kingdom, save and except such oaths and parts of oaths as are hereinbefore excepted.

“III. *And provided always*, That nothing hereinbefore contained shall extend, or be construed to extend, to repeal or alter any law or Act of Parliament now in force, by which certain qualifications are required to be performed by persons enjoying any offices or places of trust under his Majesty, his heirs and successors, other than as hereinafter is enacted.

“IV. *Provided also*, That nothing herein contained, shall extend, or be construed to extend to give Papists, or persons professing the Popish religion, a right to vote at any parish vestry for levying of money to rebuild or repair any parish church, or respecting the demising or disposal of the income of any estate belonging to any church or parish, or for the salary of the parish clerk, or at the election of any churchwarden.

“V. *Provided always*, That nothing contained in this act shall extend to, or be construed to affect any action or suit now depending, which shall have been brought or instituted previous to the commencement of this Session of Parliament.

“VI. *Provided also*, That nothing herein contained, shall extend to authorize any Papist, or person professing the Popish or Roman Catholic religion, to have or keep in his hands or possession, any arms, armour, ammunition, or any warlike stores, sword-blades, barrels, locks, or stocks of guns, or fire-arms, or to exempt such person from any forfeiture, or penalty inflicted by any act respecting arms, armour, or ammunition, in the hands or possession of any Papist, or respecting Papists having or keeping such



warlike stores, save and except Papists, or persons of the Roman Catholic religion, seized of a freehold estate of one hundred pounds a-year, or possessed of a personal estate of one thousand pounds or upwards, who are hereby authorized to keep arms and ammunition as Protestants now by law may; and also, save and except Papists or Roman Catholics possessing a freehold estate of ten pounds yearly value, and less than one hundred pounds, or a personal estate of three hundred, and less than one thousand pounds, who shall have at the session of the peace in the county in which they reside, taken the oath of allegiance prescribed to be taken by an act passed in the thirteenth and fourteenth years of his present Majesty's reign, entitled, '*An act to enable his Majesty's subjects, of whatever persuasion, to testify their allegiance to him*;' and also in open court, swear and subscribe an affidavit, that they are possessed of a freehold estate yielding a clear yearly profit to the person making the same of ten pounds, or a personal property of three hundred pounds above his just debts, specifying therein the name and nature of such freehold, and nature of such personal property, which affidavits shall be carefully preserved by the clerk of the peace, who shall have for his trouble a fee of sixpence, and no more, for every such affidavit; and the person making such affidavit, and possessing such property, may keep and use arms and ammunition as Protestants may, so long as they shall respectively possess a property of the annual value of ten pounds and upwards, if freehold, or the value of three hundred pounds if personal, any Statute to the contrary notwithstanding.

"VII. *And be it enacted*, That it shall and may be lawful for Papists, or persons professing the Popish or Roman Catholic religion, to hold, exercise, and enjoy all civil and military offices, or places of trust or profit under his Majesty, his heirs and successors, in this kingdom; and to hold or take degrees, or any professorship in, or be masters or fellows of any college, to be hereafter founded in this kingdom, provided that such college shall be a member of the University of Dublin, and shall not be founded exclusively for the education of Papists, or persons professing the Popish or Roman Catholic religion, nor consist exclusively of masters, fellows, or other persons to be named or elected on the foundation of such college, being persons professing the Popish or Roman Catholic religion; or to hold any office or place of trust in, and to be a member of any lay-body corporate, except the College of the holy and undivided Trinity of Queen Elizabeth, near Dublin, without taking and subscribing the oaths of allegiance, supremacy, or abjuration, or making or subscribing the declaration required to be taken, made, and subscribed, to enable

any such person to hold and enjoy any of such places, and without receiving the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, according to the rites and ceremonies of the Church of Ireland, any law, statute, or bye-law of any corporation to the contrary notwithstanding ; provided that every such person shall take and subscribe the oath appointed by the said act passed in the thirteenth and fourteenth years of his Majesty's reign, entitled, 'An act to enable his Majesty's subjects, of whatever persuasion, to testify their allegiance to him ;' and also the oath and declaration following, that is to say :—

“ I, A. B., do hereby declare, that I do profess the Roman Catholic religion. I, A. B., do swear, that I do abjure, condemn, and detest, as unchristian and impious, the principle that it is lawful to murder, destroy, or any ways injure any person whatsoever, for, or under the pretence of being a heretic ; and I do declare solemnly before God, that I believe, that no act in itself unjust, immoral, or wicked, can ever be justified or excused by, or under pretence, or colour, that it was done either for the good of the Church, or in obedience to any ecclesiastical power whatsoever. I also declare, that it is not an article of the Catholic faith, neither am I thereby required to believe or profess, that the Pope is infallible, or that I am bound to obey an order in its own nature immoral, though the Pope or any ecclesiastical power should issue or direct such order, but on the contrary, I hold, that it would be sinful in me to pay any respect or obedience thereto ; I further declare, that I do not believe that any sin whatsoever committed by me can be forgiven at the mere will of any Pope, or any priest, or of any person whatsoever ; but that sincere sorrow for past sins, a firm and sincere resolution to avoid future guilt, and to atone to God, are previous and indispensable requisites to establish a well-founded expectation of forgiveness, and that any person who receives absolution without these previous requisites, so far from obtaining thereby any remission of his sins, incurs the additional guilt of violating a sacrament ; and I do swear, that I will defend to the utmost of my power the settlement and arrangement of property in this country as established by the laws now in being ; I do hereby disclaim, disavow, and solemnly abjure any intention to subvert the present Church Establishment for the purpose of substituting a Catholic Establishment in its stead, and I do solemnly swear, that I will not exercise any privilege, to which I am or may become entitled, to disturb and weaken the Protestant religion and Protestant government in this kingdom. So help me God.’

“ VIII. *And be it enacted*, That Papists, or persons professing

the Popish or Roman Catholic religion, may be capable of being elected professors of medicine, upon the foundation of Sir Patrick Dunn, any law or Statute to the contrary notwithstanding.

“IX. *Provided always, and be it enacted*, That nothing herein contained shall extend, or be construed to extend, to enable any person to sit or vote in either House of Parliament, or to hold, exercise, or enjoy the office of lord lieutenant, lord deputy, or other chief governor or governors of this kingdom, lord high chancellor or keeper, or commissioner of the great seal of this kingdom, lord high treasurer, chancellor of the exchequer, chief justice of the Court of King’s Bench, or Common Pleas, lord chief baron of the Court of Exchequer, justice of the Court of King’s Bench or Common Pleas, or baron of the Court of Exchequer, judge of the High Court of Admiralty, master or keeper of the rolls, secretary of state, keeper of the privy seal, vice-treasurer, or deputy vice-treasurer, teller and cashier of the Exchequer, or auditor general, lieutenant or governor, or custos rotulorum of counties, secretary to the lord lieutenant, lord deputy, or other chief governor or governors of this kingdom, member of his Majesty’s most honourable privy council, prime sergeant, attorney general, solicitor general, second and third sergeants at law, or king’s council, masters in chancery, provost or fellow of the College of the holy and undivided Trinity of Queen Elizabeth, near Dublin; postmaster-general, master, and lieutenant-general of his Majesty’s ordnance, commander-in-chief of his Majesty’s forces, generals on the staff, and sheriffs and sub-sheriffs of any county in this kingdom; or any office contrary to the rules, orders, and directions made and established by the lord lieutenant and council in pursuance of the act passed in the seventeenth and eighteenth years of King Charles the Second, entitled, ‘An act for the explaining of some doubts arising upon an act entitled, An act for the better execution of his Majesty’s gracious declaration for the settlement of this kingdom of Ireland, and satisfaction of the several interests of adventurers, soldiers, and other his subjects there, and for making some alterations of, and additions unto the said act, for the more speedy and effectual settlement of this kingdom,’ unless he shall have taken, made, and subscribed the oaths and declarations, and performed the several requisites, which by any law heretofore made, and now of force, are required to enable any person to sit or vote, or to hold, exercise, and enjoy the said offices respectively.

“X. *Provided also, and be it enacted*, That nothing in this act contained shall enable any Papist, or person professing the Popish



or Roman Catholic religion, to exercise any right of presentation to any ecclesiastical benefice whatsoever.

“XI. *And be it enacted*, That no Papist, or person professing the Popish or Roman Catholic religion, shall be liable or subject to any penalty for not attending divine service on the Sabbath day, called Sunday, in his or her parish church.

“XII. *Provided also, and be it enacted*, That nothing herein contained, shall be construed to extend to authorize any Popish priest, or reputed Popish priest, to celebrate marriage between Protestant and Protestant, or between any person, who hath been or professed himself or herself to be a Protestant at any time within twelve months before such celebration of marriage, and a Papist, unless such Protestant and Papist shall have been first married by a clergyman of the Protestant religion, and that every Popish priest, or reputed Popish priest, who shall celebrate any marriage between two Protestants, or between any such Protestant and Papist, unless such Protestant and Papist shall have been first married by a clergyman of the Protestant religion, shall forfeit the sum of five hundred pounds to his Majesty, upon conviction thereof.

“XIII. *And whereas* it may be expedient, in case his Majesty his heirs and successors, shall be pleased so to alter the Statutes of the College of the holy and undivided Trinity near Dublin, and of the University of Dublin, as to enable persons professing the Roman Catholic religion to enter into or to take degrees in the said university, to remove any obstacle, which now exists by Statute law; *be it enacted*, That from and after the first day of June, one thousand seven hundred and ninety-three, it shall not be necessary for any person upon taking any of the degrees usually conferred by the said university, to make or subscribe any declaration, or to take any oath, save the oaths of allegiance and abjuration, any law or Statute to the contrary notwithstanding.

“XIV. *Provided always*, That no Papist or Roman Catholic, or person professing the Roman Catholic, or Popish religion, shall take any benefit by or under this act, unless he shall have first taken and subscribed the oath and declaration in this act contained and set forth, and also the said oath appointed by the said act passed in the thirteenth and fourteenth years of his Majesty's reign, entitled, ‘An act to enable his Majesty's subjects, of whatever persuasion, to testify their allegiance to him,’ in some one of his Majesty's Four Courts in Dublin, or at the general sessions of the peace, or at any adjournment thereof to be holden for the county, city, or borough wherein such Papist or Roman Catholic, or person professing the Roman Catholic or Popish religion, doth

inhabit or dwell, or before the going judge or judges of assize in the county wherein such Papist or Roman Catholic, or person professing the Roman Catholic or Popish religion, doth inhabit and dwell, in open court.

“XV. *Provided always, and be it enacted*, That the names of such persons as shall so take and subscribe the said oath and declaration, with their titles and additions, shall be entered upon the rolls, for that purpose to be appointed by said respective courts; and that the said rolls once in every year shall be transmitted to, and deposited in the Rolls Office in this kingdom, to remain amongst the records thereof, and the masters or keepers of the rolls in this kingdom, or their lawful deputy or deputies, are hereby empowered and required to give and deliver to such person or persons so taking and subscribing the said oaths and declaration, a certificate or certificates of such person or persons having taken and subscribed the said oaths and declaration, for each of which certificates the sum of one shilling and no more shall be paid.

“XVI. *And be it further provided and enacted*, That from and after the first day of April, one thousand seven hundred and ninety-three, no freeholder, burgess, freeman, or inhabitant of this kingdom, being a Papist or Roman Catholic, or person professing the Roman Catholic or Popish religion, shall at any time be capable of giving his vote for the electing of any knight or knights of any shire or county within this kingdom, or citizen or burgess, to serve in any Parliament, until he shall have first produced and shown to the high sheriff of the said county, or his deputy or deputies, at any election of a knight or knights of the said shire, and to the respective chief officer or officers of any city, borough, or town-corporate, to whom the return of any citizen or burgess to serve in Parliament doth or shall respectively belong, at the election of any citizen or burgess to serve in Parliament, such certificate of his having taken and subscribed the said oath and declaration, either from the Rolls Office, or from the proper officer of the court in which the said oaths and declaration shall be taken and subscribed; and such person being a freeholder, freeman, burgess, or inhabitant so producing and showing such certificate, shall be then permitted to vote, as amply and fully as any Protestant freeholder, freeman, burgess, or inhabitant of such county, city, borough, or town-corporate, but not otherwise.”

This law, it may be thought, saved tolerably well the main privileges of the odious “Ascendancy;” and still left the two sects, or two nations, in the relative position of a superior and an inferior *caste*: but the requirements of English policy at this time

were absolute and undeniable. It was however felt by the thoroughgoing Protestants of Ireland to be a sore humiliation thus at last to have to acknowledge the civil existence of Papists at all, and that Papists no longer breathed altogether by "connivance." But the irritation of the Protestant interest was soothed by certain other measures which the Government carried through this Session—the Gunpowder Act and the Convention Act. The Gunpowder Act, entitled "An Act to prevent the importation of Arms, Gunpowder, and Ammunition into this Kingdom, and the removing and keeping of Gunpowder, Arms, and Ammunition without licence," contained very oppressive provisions, authorizing magistrates and police to make searches for arms; and may be called the first of the regular series of "Arms Acts," with which Ireland is so familiar down to the present day. It was not at all opposed in Parliament: indeed, like all the other Arms Acts, it purported to be a temporary measure, to be in force only until the 1st of January, 1794, and the end of then next Session of Parliament. The Government pretended that it was needed just at that time to defeat and suppress the seditious conspiracy which Lord Clare and the Committee of the Lords had discovered; but which did not then exist at all; and which afterwards was occasioned, or indeed rendered necessary, by the atrocious abuse of the very coercive laws which were said to be intended to defeat it.

But the second of these two acts, the Convention Act, Lord Clare's special and favourite measure, stamps that nobleman as the true author and creator of British policy in Ireland, from his own time until this hour. The bill was introduced into the House of Lords by Lord Clare himself. Its real and plain object was to prevent the prevalence of the successful example of the Catholic Convention, and to anticipate a Convention which it was alleged that the United Irish Society was about to convene at Athlone.

This act (33 Geo. III., c. 29) to prevent the election or appointment of unlawful assemblies, under pretence of preparing or presenting public petitions or other addresses to his Majesty or the Parliament, recites, that the election or appointment of assemblies, purporting to represent the people, or any description of the people, under pretence of preparing or presenting petitions, complaints, remonstrances, and declarations, and other addresses to the King, or to both or either Houses of Parliament, for alteration of matters established by law, for redress of alleged grievances in Church and State, may be made use of to serve the ends of factious and seditious persons, to the violation of the public peace, and the great and manifest encouragement of riot, tumult, and disorder: and it enacts, that all such assemblies, committees, or



other bodies of persons elected, or otherwise constituted or appointed are unlawful assemblies, and that all persons giving or publishing notice of the election to be made of such persons or delegates, or attending, or voting, or acting therein by any means, are guilty of a high misdemeanour. The act concludes with a declaration, "that nothing in it shall impede the undoubted right of his Majesty's subjects to petition the King or Parliament for redress of any public or private grievance."

This measure gave rise to long and acrimonious debates. When it was in committee, Mr. Grattan made a vigorous speech against it: his chief objection to it was, that it was a false declaration of law, and deprived the subject of his constitutional right of petitioning effectually against grievances by rendering the previous measure of consultation and deliberation criminal. Especially he was indignant that it by implication condemned all previous conventions of delegates which had ever been held, including his own Volunteer Convention. He said—"This bill is said to be an expedient to restore peace; why then is it a *reflection*? Why do the preamble and declaration pronounce every man who has been a delegate, all the Volunteers, the delegates at Dungannon, the delegates of the Convention, the committee of the Lawyers' Corps, and the corps that appointed that committee; the committee of the Catholics, their late conventions, and all the Catholics who appointed that Convention—that is the whole Catholic body—offenders, men guilty of an unlawful assembly, and this moment liable to be prosecuted! For so much has the bill in object: not the peace of the country, but reflection on great bodies, the gratification of spleen at the expense of the constitution, by voting false doctrine into law, and the brightest passages of your history into unlawful assemblies. Gentlemen have conceived this bill an expedient to quell insurgents: let them read the bill. It is not a riot act: it does not go against riots that are, but Conventions that are not. The title of the bill, as first brought in, was to prevent riots and tumults arising from Conventions; but as the bill had nothing to say to riots, and no riots appeared to have arisen from Conventions, such title was in decency dropped, and the object of the bill was now professed to be an Act against Conventions. Gentlemen said a National Convention at Athlone was intended. He did not believe that such a one had been intended some time ago, but that then it was not so; or if then intended, that it would be trifling and contemptible. His objection to the bill was, that it was a trick, making a supposed National Convention at Athlone, in 1793, a pretext for preventing delegation for ever."

All opposition was vain. The Government had fabricated an *alarm*, purposely to get this act passed. Mr. Secretary Hobart's remarks on the occasion of this debate, expose clearly enough the whole policy of the Government :—

Mr. Hobart declared, nothing gave him more pain, than that the debate on this bill should have extended to such length, or that it should, on the close of the Session, create anything like a disunion of sentiment. He declared that nothing but the very *alarming* state to which the country had been reduced by a spirit of popular commotion, excited by Conventions usurping the privileges of representation, and assuming to control Parliament, could have induced him to consent to the introduction of this bill ; and even the nobleman, who had brought it into the other House, before he had done so, had considered it over and over again, and did not bring it forward until absolute necessity called for some effectual measure to stem the torrent of sedition, at a time when writs had been issued by the society called United Irishmen, for the purpose of assembling the Convention at Athlone, and under a conviction, that if Parliament should break up without adopting the bill, which in his idea never did, nor never was intended to meddle with the constitutional rights of the people, the constitution itself might be subverted before Parliament could be assembled.

The act passed : on the final division, the teller in favour of the passage was Arthur Wellesley. There is not, and never was, any such law in England. From that day to this, it has effectually prevented the people of Ireland from deliberating in an orderly and authoritative manner, by means of accredited delegates, upon their own affairs. It was afterwards the rock ahead which confronted O'Connell in all his agitation. This law it was which prevented his calling together the promised "Council of Three Hundred," and left him only the alternative of inorganic "Monster meetings"—which latter indeed were also made criminal by a prudent interpretation of law.

In this same Session of Parliament, and before the passage of the Catholic Relief Bill, there was passed a new Militia Bill, introduced by Lord Hillsborough, to establish the militia, as his Lordship said, "as nearly as circumstances would permit, on the same plan as that of England." The whole number of men he proposed to be 16,000, upon a rough estimate 500 for each county. The new militia law was one of the most efficient of that series of measures now secured by the Government to enable them at any time to crush down every popular movement which was not to their own taste.

The General Committee of the Catholics had adjourned after despatching their delegates to the King, and they had left a sub-committee sitting in Dublin, with power to act for them between their rising and their next meeting; but they made a material alteration in its constitution, by associating to the twelve members who then formed it, the whole of the country delegates, each of whom was henceforward to be, *ipso facto*, a member thereof. They then resolved, unanimously, that they would reassemble when duly summoned by the sub-committee, who were invested with powers for that purpose. "We will attend," cried a member from a remote county (*O'Gorman, of Mayo*), "if we are summoned to meet across the Atlantic."

The sub-committee had entered into a series of negotiations with Mr. Secretary Hobart respecting the details of their Relief Bill. But although the original demand in the address to the King was for *general relief*, including admission to both Houses of Parliament, it soon became evident to the minister that they would take much less. Wolfe Tone, in his indignant narrative of these proceedings, says:—

"In the first interview with the Irish minister, the two Houses of Parliament were at once given up, and the question began to be, not how much must be conceded, but how much might be withheld. So striking a change did not escape the vigilance of the administration; they instantly recovered from the panic which had led them into such indiscreet, and, as it now appeared unnecessary concessions at the opening of Parliament; they dexterously seduced the Catholics into the strong ground of negotiation, so well known to themselves, so little to their adversaries; they procrastinated, and they distinguished, they started doubts, they pleaded difficulties; the measure of relief was gradually curtailed, and, during the tedious and anxious progress of discussion, whilst the Catholic mind, their hopes and fears were unremittingly intent on the progress of their bill, which was obviously and designedly suspended, the acts already commemorated (*Militia, Gunpowder, and Convention Acts*) were driven through both Houses with the utmost impetuosity, and, with the most cordial and unanimous concurrence of all parties, received the royal assent."

In fact, the leading Catholics,\* whether prelates or land pro-

\* One of the most striking indications of the success which attended the policy of Government to attach to them the leading Catholics, and especially the bishops, and so keep the Catholic body out of the United Irish ranks, appears in the tone of the pastoral letters of various prelates to their flocks, in which they warned them against "nefarious designs" and lawless persons.



prietors, seemed to be, or affected to be, quite satisfied with the poor relief they had obtained: and we find henceforth less and less disposition on their part to join in, or to countenance, the ultra-liberal views of the United Irishmen. In truth, there was no body of men in the three kingdoms more naturally disposed to abhor "French principles" than the Catholic peers, gentry, and bishops, who thought their own interests safer under the British Government than in the liberty and equality of a republic on the French model. The ablest workers, it is true, on the General Committee, John Keogh, McNeven, and Richard McCormick, joined the United Irish Society, which had not yet become revolutionary, republican, and separatist, but which was soon to be forced into that extreme position.

The same Session of Parliament of 1793, saw the passage of some measures which had been amongst the favourite objects of the opposition for years. It seemed, indeed, at the commencement of that Session as if the principle of Parliamentary Reform were to be admitted and fully carried out. The several great objects which had been urged by the opposition, ever since the last Parliament, with great perseverance and ability, were the Responsibility Bill, the Place and the Pension Bill. There were also other measures of great consequence, but of less general importance; such as the disqualifying of revenue officers from sitting in Parliament, and the repeal of the Police Act. By the Responsibility Bill, no money could be disposed of by the sole order from the King, as was before the case; for Irish officers were to sign all warrants; and every warrant and officer came before Parliament. The necessary consequence of such a bill was, that the hereditary revenue was given up, and, like the additional supply, voted annually. The great effect and consequence of such a measure, any man who understood Government, must see at a glance.

By the Pension Bill all pensioners for years or during pleasure were excluded; and the sum, which then was near £120,000 a-year, was reduced to £80,000.

By the Place Bill, all new places from the date of the bill were disqualified. Officers of revenue, whose duty required their absence from Dublin, were excluded: and the principle of excluding them all was carried.

Besides the acts already mentioned, the following popular acts

From this moment, also, the laborious Mr. Plowden, in his useful *Historical Review*, never has a good word for the unfortunate Defenders, or any other Irishmen who did not choose to submit quietly and patiently to the very uttermost extremities of tyranny.

were passed in the Session of 1793, viz. (33 Geo. III., c. xxv.) :—  
 “An Act to encourage the Improvement of Barren Land ;” (xxxii.)  
 “An Act for regulating the Trade of Ireland to and from the  
 East Indies, under certain conditions and provisions for a time  
 therein mentioned ;” (33 Geo. III., c. xxxiv.) “An Act for  
 the support of the Honour and Dignity of his Majesty’s Crown  
 in Ireland, and for granting to his Majesty a Civil List Estab-  
 lishment, under certain Provisions and Regulations ;” (33 Geo.  
 III., c. xli.) “An Act for securing the Freedom and Independence  
 of the House of Commons, by excluding therefrom Persons  
 holding any Offices under the Crown, to be hereafter created, or  
 holding certain Offices therein enumerated, or Pensions for Term  
 of Years, or during his Majesty’s Pleasure ;” (33 Geo. III., c.  
 xlviii.) “An Act to remove Doubts respecting the Functions of  
 Juries in Cases of Libel ;” (33 Geo. III., c. lii.) “An Act for the  
 Advancement of Trade and Manufactures, by granting the Sums  
 therein mentioned for the Support of Commercial Credit.”

But no general measure of reform could be carried. The conciliatory disposition of the Government abated sensibly in proportion as the French successes on the Continent seemed more doubtful. In fact, Dumouriez lost the Low Countries as quickly as he had won them : rather indeed he had given up his conquests to the Allies ; having, as is well-known, become a traitor to his country. The miserable wretch subsisted for many years on a pension from the English Government, and died in Buckinghamshire, in 1823. It was believed for a time in England that the French Revolution was going back, and that the danger was in a great measure past. They resolved therefore to rely on the trifling concessions they had already made to conciliate the opposition party and the upper classes of the Catholics, and to make relentless use of their new coercion acts in “stamping out” United Irishmen.

The Session was closed on the 16th of August, 1793.

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## CHAPTER XXVIII.

1793—1795.

THE limited and grudging measure for relief of the Catholics had by no means had the effect of destroying the odious distinctions which had so long divided Irishmen of different religious persuasions. The law indeed was changed, but the insolent and exclusive spirit which had inspired the Penal Code ; the very

marked and offensive disabilities which still left the Catholic people in a condition of legal inferiority, gave the "Ascendancy" ample opportunity to make them feel daily and hourly that they were still a proscribed and oppressed race. Great difficulties at first prevailed in raising the different regiments of militia; for although Catholics were rendered capable of serving in them, no Catholic officers were appointed; this marked reprobation of all gentlemen of that communion so directly in the teeth of the act, diffused a general diffidence amidst the lower orders, and it was found necessary to appoint several Catholic officers, before the militia corps could be completed.

Catholics were not yet eligible as mayors or sheriffs, but there was now no legal exclusion of them from the guilds of merchants. Accordingly, thirty highly respectable Catholic merchants of Dublin applied for admission into their guild, but were rejected on the mere ground of their religion. In every part of the kingdom continual efforts were made to traduce and vilify the whole Catholic body, in order to defeat and annul the measures which the Legislature had passed in their favour. Never, perhaps, in all the history of the country, had the virulent malignity of the bigots been so busy in charging upon Catholics all manner of evil principles and practices. Their indignant denials of these imputations were utterly unheeded. Every town corporation followed the example of that of Dublin, and excluded Catholics even from the poor privilege of belonging to the guild of their trades. The growth and progress of Defenderism, particularly in the county of Meath, afforded fuel to the enemies of the Catholic body, which they studied to implicate in the outrages which were sometimes committed. Painful industry was employed to work up the imaginations of the inhabitants into the expectation of a general massacre of all the Protestants throughout that county. No arts were left untried to criminate the Catholic body; every exceptional word or action of an individual, however contemptible, was charged on the whole; and the object was now, not so much to suppress the Defenders, as to fasten their enormities on the Catholic body.

On several trials which took place at the assizes for Meath County in prosecuting men charged with being Defenders, the juries were composed exclusively of Protestants. Catholics, it is true, were legally competent to sit on juries, but in every case of prosecution by the Crown, the Protestant sheriff took care to show them that they were not regarded as "good and lawful men." Irritated and humiliated by such continued oppression, it is not wonderful if many of the Catholics began to despair of



being ever allowed to live in peace and honour in their native land without such a revolution as would destroy both the "Ascendency" and the English connection along with it. Great numbers of them about this time joined the United Irish Society, which was not yet indeed a revolutionary or republican body in form, although its principal leaders were revolutionists in principle, and already foresaw the necessity which shortly after drove them into armed insurrection. The Catholic bishops, it must be admitted (if it be any credit to them), most vehemently opposed the United Irishmen, and omitted no occasion of protesting their "loyalty," and pouring execration upon "French principles." In the humble address to the King from nine Catholic bishops, we find these strong expressions, which prove a spirit of the most determined submissiveness under oppression:—

"Whilst we lament the necessity that inflicts the calamities of war upon any, even the most depraved of our fellow-creatures, we incessantly supplicate the Almighty Disposer of events, that, blessing your Majesty's arms with success, He may crown you with the glory of stopping the progress of that atheistical faction, which aims at the subversion of every religious and moral principle.

"We look towards that unhappy nation, which is the object of hostility, and acknowledge with humble thanksgiving the goodness of Divine Providence, which, under the best of constitutions, has bestowed on the land we live in, freedom exempt from anarchy, protection guarded against oppression, and a Prince calculated by his wisdom and virtue to preserve that happy condition of society."

It is a part of the history of our country that these four archbishops and five bishops did actually bear this high testimony to the freedom and happiness of Ireland, at a time when every accused Catholic was tried before a packed jury of his enemies—when no Catholic could be a magistrate or sheriff, and therefore no Catholic had the least chance of justice in any court—when the unfortunate flocks of these prelates were having their stacks of grain sold to pay tithes to clergymen they never saw, and church-rates to support churches which they never entered.

The Government now began a system of active operations against the United Irishmen. Two of their chiefs, Simon Butler and Oliver Bond, the first a barrister, the second a Dublin merchant, had already, in 1792, been summoned to the bar of the House of Lords, charged with having acted as chairman and secretary of one of the meetings in Taylor's Hall, at which an address to the people was adopted, very strongly denouncing the

corrupt composition of Parliament. This was construed as an offence against the privilege of Parliament; and Butler and Bond were condemned to be imprisoned for six months, and to pay each a fine of £500. The next leader marked for vengeance was the famous Archibald Hamilton Rowan, the friend of Tone, and one of the boldest of the early chiefs of the Society. It was determined to prosecute him on a charge of sedition, on account of an address "to the Volunteers," adopted at a meeting where he acted as secretary. The address had been adopted and published two years before; yet the Government had hesitated all this while to bring him to trial. In fact, arrangements had first to be perfected to ensure the packing of the jury. This was done by making John Gifford, one of the most unscrupulous and indefatigable partizans of the "Ascendency," one of the Sheriffs of Dublin; he knew precisely on what jurors the Castle could depend. It was on occasion of this trial that the system of jury-packing was thoroughly organized and reduced to an art; it has since that time formed the chief instrument of British Government in Ireland.

The prosecuted address was written by Drennan; and its first paragraph will show the nature of the "sedition:"—

"Citizen-soldiers, you first took up arms to protect your country from foreign enemies and from domestic disturbance; for the same purposes it now becomes necessary, that you should resume them; a proclamation has been issued in England for embodying the militia, and a proclamation has been issued by the Lord Lieutenant and Council in Ireland for repressing all seditious associations; in consequence of both these proclamations, it is reasonable to apprehend danger from abroad and danger at home, from whence but from apprehended danger are these menacing preparations for war drawn through the streets of this capital, or whence if not to create that internal commotion which was not found, to shake that credit which was not affected, to blast that volunteer honour which was hitherto inviolate, are those terrible suggestions and rumours and whispers that meet us at every corner, and agitate at least our old men, our women, and children; whatever be the motive, or from whatever quarter it arises, alarm has arisen, and you Volunteers of Ireland are therefore summoned to arms at the instance of Government as well as by the responsibility attached to your character, and the permanent obligations of your constitution. We will not at this day condescend to quote authorities for the right of having and of using arms, but we will cry aloud, even amidst the storm raised by the witchcraft of a proclamation, that to your

formation was owing the peace and protection of this island, to your relaxation has been owing its relapse into impotence and insignificance, to your renovation must be owing its future freedom and its present tranquillity; you are therefore summoned to arms, in order to preserve your country in that guarded quiet, which may secure it from external hostility, and to maintain that internal regimen throughout the land, which, superseding a notorious police, or a suspected militia, may preserve the blessings of peace by a vigilant preparation for war."

The address went on to recommend a civil and military convention, which was not against the law at that time, though in the next year the "Convention Act" was passed to prevent all such assemblies."

Upon this the Attorney-General filed an *ex-officio* information. The trial came on the 29th of January, 1794, though the information had been filed as far back as the 8th of the preceding June. Upon calling over the jury one of them was objected against, as holding a place under the Crown, but the Attorney-General insisted upon the illegality of the objection, and observed, that it went against all that was honourable and respectable in the land. It was, therefore, overruled by the Court. After a trial of about ten hours, the jury found Rowan guilty. This was very unexpected by Mr. Rowan's party. A motion was afterwards made in court to set aside the verdict, and grant a new trial grounded on several affidavits. The motion was argued for six days, and was at last discharged. The grounds upon which the defendant's counsel rested their case were:—1st. Upon the declaration of a juror against Mr. Rowan, viz., that the country would never be quiet till he was hanged or banished. 2nd. Upon the partiality of Mr. Giffard, the sheriff, who had so arrayed the panel as to have him tried by an unfair jury. 3rd. Upon the incredibility of one Lister, the chief and only witness against him; and, 4th. The misdirection of the Court. The sentence of the Court upon Mr. Rowan was to pay to his Majesty a fine of £500 and be imprisoned two years, to be computed from the 29th of January, 1794, and until the fine was paid, and to find security for his good behaviour for seven years, himself in £2,000, and two sureties in £1,000 each. The verdict and judgment of the Court gave great dissatisfaction to the popular party. Their disapprobation of the verdict was expressed in court by groans and hisses.

Parliament met on the 21st of January; and in March, Mr. Wm. Brabazon Ponsonby presented his bill for amending the state of the representation of the people in Parliament. Mr. Grattan and



Sir Lawrence Parsons supported the bill ; the Government party does not seem to have even taken the trouble to debate the question, being quite sure of the result. On motion of Sir Hercules Langrishe it was ordered to be read a second time that day six months ; and so ended all efforts for reform in the Irish Parliament. The Houses were prorogued on the 25th of March.

In the meantime, Hamilton Rowan was lying in Newgate, according to his sentence. The United Irish Society of Dublin voted him an address in his prison, vehemently denouncing the packing of juries, and promising "*inflexible determination to pursue the great object of our association—an equal and impartial representation of the people in Parliament.*" But the Government was now determined to treat these extra-Parliamentary reformers without ceremony. On the 4th of May, their ordinary place of meeting, the Tailors' Hall in Back-lane was invaded by the police, the meeting dispersed and the papers seized. After this event many of the more timid, or prudent members, fell off altogether from the society ; but the more resolute and indignant, especially the Republican portion of the body, made up their minds from this moment to re-organize the society upon a distinctly revolutionary and military basis, which they effected in the course of the next year. Their reasons for taking this extreme resolution were—that as the people were not fairly represented in Parliament, and had no hope of being so represented—as the Convention Act had deprived them of the right to consult on their common affairs publicly, by means of delegates appointed for that purpose—and as even trial by jury was now virtually abolished, so that no man's life or liberty had any longer the slightest protection from the laws, they were thrown back upon their original rights and remedies as human beings—that is to say, the right and remedy of revolution.

A few days before the attack of the police upon the Tailors' Hall, a certain Rev. William Jackson, a clergyman of the Church of England, was arrested in Dublin on a charge of high treason. He had come from France, with instructions from the Government of the Republic to have an emissary appointed by the United Irish leaders who should go to Paris and negotiate for French aid in a revolutionary movement. He had come by way of London ; and there Mr. Pitt, who was perfectly aware of his errand and his every movement, contrived that he should be provided with a companion upon his mission. This was one Cockayne, an attorney, who came to Dublin with Mr. Jackson, and affected great zeal in the cause of liberty and of Ireland. Jackson had letters of introduction to Lord Edward Fitzgerald, who refused,

however, to hold any communication with him. He was introduced, however, to Wolfe Tone, and had several interviews with Rowan in prison. Tone at first entered into his views, and undertook to be himself the agent who should go to France; but at the next interview, having conceived suspicions of Cockayne, if not of Jackson himself, he drew back, and declined further negotiation. Rowan, however, was less cautious, and had many interviews with Jackson and Cockayne, in which he endeavoured first to secure Tone's services as the French agent, and on his refusal, Dr. Reynolds'. All this while Mr. Pitt and the Government were kept fully apprised of all that was going forward; and at length, when it was supposed there was evidence enough to involve Jackson, Tone, Rowan, and Reynolds in a charge of high treason, Jackson was arrested, brought to trial the next year, convicted on the testimony of Cockayne, and about to be sentenced to death, when he dropped dead in court, having swallowed arsenic for that purpose.

On the 1st of May, Archibald Hamilton Rowan, now certain of being tried, convicted and executed for high treason, escaped from Newgate prison, arrived in France, and thence proceeded to America. Reynolds avoided arrest by timely flight. Tone was not apprehended; but he was given to understand that the accusation was hanging over him; and was left the option of quitting the country, but without any promise being exacted on his part as to his course for the future. Before going away, he wrote a narrative of the two conversations he had with Jackson. Tone's son, in his memoir of his father, says:—"When my father delivered this paper, the prevalent opinion, which he then shared, was, that Jackson was a secret emissary employed by the British Government. It required the unfortunate man's voluntary death to clear his character of such a foul imputation. What renders this transaction the more odious, is, that, before his arrival in Ireland, the life of Jackson was completely in the power of the British Government. His evil genius was already pinned upon him; his mission from France, his every thought and his views, were known. He was allowed to proceed, not in order to detect an existing conspiracy in Ireland, but to form one, and thus increase the number of victims. A more atrocious instance of perfidious and gratuitous cruelty is scarcely to be found in the history of any country but Ireland."

In May, 1765, Tone proceeded to Belfast with his family, met there some of his early associates in the formation of the first United Irish Club, and made some agreeable excursions with them. One of the scenes which he describes in his memoirs is

impressive, seen in the light of subsequent events :—"I remember, particularly, two days that we passed on the Cave hill. On the first, Russell, Neilson, Simms, M'Cracken and one or two more of us, on the summit of M'Art's fort, took a solemn obligation, which, I think I may say, I have on my part endeavoured to fulfil—never to desist in our efforts, until we had subverted the authority of England over our country, and asserted her independence."

Tone had already solemnly promised his friends in Dublin, that if he now retired to the United States, it would only be to proceed thence to France, and labour to form the alliance which he regarded as the grand mission of his life between the French Republic and a republic in Ireland.

In the beginning of the year 1795, owing to certain arrangements between the English ministers and those lately "coalized" Whigs who had been admitted to a share in the administration, Lord Westmoreland was recalled from Ireland, and Lord Fitzwilliam was sent over as Lord Lieutenant. This gave great hope and satisfaction to the Irish Catholics and their friends in Parliament. Lord Fitzwilliam was a Whig of the Burke school, a close friend of the Duke of Portland; and it was universally understood that he had not undertaken the government of Ireland save on the express terms that complete Catholic Emancipation would be made a Government measure. Indeed, this was well known; for before consenting to come to Ireland he had induced Mr. Grattan to go over and confer with him on the policy to be pursued. Mr. Grattan, of course, made the emancipation of the Catholics the main and indispensable point; and the Duke of Portland and Lord Fitzwilliam fully concurred, with the distinct assent also of Mr. Pitt. For the due understanding of the cruel fraud which that minister was now meditating upon the Irish nation, it is needful that this previous arrangement of policy should be made clear; and, fortunately, we have the evidence, both of Mr. Grattan and Lord Fitzwilliam himself, in full contradiction to the reckless assertions of Fitzgibbon. Mr. Grattan, in his *Answer to Lord Clare*, says :—"In summer, on a change being made in the British Cabinet, being informed by some of the learned persons therein, that the administration of the Irish department was to belong to them, and that they sent for us to adopt our measures, I stated the Catholic Emancipation to be one of them." And Lord Fitzwilliam, in his letters to Lord Carlisle, makes this explicit statement :—"From the very beginning, as well as through the whole progress of that fatal business, for fatal I fear I must call it, I acted in perfect conformity with the original outline



settled between me and his Majesty's ministry, previous to my departure from London. From a full consideration of the real merits of the case, as well as from every information I had been able to collect of the state and temper of Ireland, from the year 1790, I was decidedly of opinion, that not only sound policy, but justice, required, on the part of Great Britain, that the work, which was left imperfect at that period, ought to be completed, and the Catholics relieved from every remaining disqualification. In this opinion the Duke of Portland uniformly concurred with me, and when this question came under discussion, previous to my departure for Ireland, I found the Cabinet, with Mr. Pitt at their head, strongly impressed with the same conviction. Had I found it otherwise, I never would have undertaken the Government. I at first proposed that the additional indulgences should be offered from the throne; the very best effects would be secured by this act of unsolicited graciousness; and the embarrassing consequences which it was natural to foresee must result from the measures being left open for any volunteer to bring forward, would be timely and happily avoided. But to this proposal objections were started, that appeared of sufficient weight to induce the adoption of another plan. I consented not to bring the question forward on the part of Government, but rather to endeavour to keep it back, until a period of more general tranquillity, when so many material objects might not press upon the Government, but as the principle was agreed on, and the necessity of its being brought into full effect was universally allowed, it was at the same time resolved, that if the Catholics should appear determined to stir the business, and bring it before Parliament, I was to give it a handsome support on the part of the Government.

"I was no sooner landed, and informed of the real state of things here, than I found that question would force itself upon my immediate consideration. Faithful to the system that had been agreed on, and anxious to attain the object that had been committed to my discretion, I lost not a moment in gaining every necessary information, or in transmitting the result to the British Cabinet. As early as the 8th of January, I wrote to the Secretary of State on the subject; I told him that I trembled about the Roman Catholics; that I had great fears about keeping them quiet for the Session; that I found the question already in agitation; that a committee was appointed to bring forward a petition to Parliament, praying for a repeal of all remaining disqualifications. I mentioned my intentions of immediately using what efforts I could to stop the progress of it, and to bring the Catholics back to a confidence in Government. I stated the substance of

some conversations I had on the subject with some of the principal persons of the country. It was the opinion of one of these, that if the postponing of the question could be negotiated on grounds of expediency, it ought not to be resisted by Government. That it should be put off for some time, was allowed by another to be a desirable thing, but the principle of extension was at the same time strongly insisted on, and forcibly inculcated, as a matter of the most urgent necessity."

Lord Fitzwilliam took possession of his government on the 4th of January, 1795. Parliament stood prorogued until the 22nd of January. He occupied the intervening time in making some dismissals from office, which created great dismay and resentment in the Castle circles, and proportional joy in the minds of the people. Mr. Grattan was invited to accept the post of Chancellor of the Exchequer, but declined. Mr. Ponsonby and Mr. Curran were to be made Attorney and Solicitor-General; and these appointments in themselves were significant of a marked change in the Irish policy. But nothing struck the country with such surprise and pleasure, mingled with apprehension, as the dismissal of Mr. Beresford from the Revenue Board. The Beresford family was at that time the most powerful of the aristocracy of Ireland; had the two peerages of Waterford and Tyrone, and had also been so successful in its constant efforts to create for itself a controlling influence by means of patronage and boroughmongering, that it was thought no Viceroy could dare to displace a Beresford. In the letter cited before, addressed to Lord Carlisle, Fitzwilliam says:—"And now for the grand question about Mr. Beresford. In a letter of mine to Mr. Pitt on this subject, I reminded him of a conversation, in which I had expressed to him (in answer to the question put to him by me), my apprehensions, that it would be necessary to remove that gentleman, and that he did not offer the slightest objection, or say a single word in favour of Mr. Beresford. This alone would have made me suppose that I should be exempt from every imputation of breach of agreement if I determined to remove him; but when, on my arrival here, I found all those apprehensions of his dangerous power, which Mr. Pitt admits I had often represented to him, were fully justified; when he was filling a situation greater than that of the Lord Lieutenant; and I clearly saw, that if I had connected myself with him, it would have been connecting myself with a person under universal heavy suspicions, and subjecting my government to all the opprobrium and unpopularity attendant upon his mal-administration."

This bold step, as it was then felt to be, still further confirmed the joyful expectation, that an ample Catholic Relief Bill would

soon be brought in and sustained by the Government. All the Catholics and liberal Protestants were highly pleased at the prospect. The *Northern Star*, organ of the United Irishmen, published in Belfast, had triumphantly announced Catholic Emancipation as a matter settled. The Catholics generally agreed to put their case into the hands of Mr. Grattan, their old and warm advocate ; and it seems highly probable that if the compact made with Lord Fitzwilliam had been observed, and all the remaining disabilities of Catholics frankly removed at once, the insurrection would never have taken place, and infinite misery and atrocity saved to the country. But Mr. Pitt knew well that if there were no insurrection there would also be no Union. He had his plans already almost matured ; and his chief adviser for Irish affairs was the *thorough* Lord Clare.

Mr. Beresford, the dismissed Commissioner of the Revenue, at once went to England, laid his complaints before Mr. Pitt, and even had an audience of the King. Lord Fitzwilliam very soon found, from the tenor of the letters he received from Pitt, that the minister was dissatisfied with some of his measures ; and disquieting rumours prevailed that he would not long remain in Ireland.

In the meantime, Catholic petitions poured into the House. Mr. Grattan moved for leave to bring in his Catholic Relief Bill ; and leave was given with only three dissentient voices. This was of itself a very remarkable feature in Irish politics ; and what was even more notable was the fact that no counter-petitions of Protestants were sent in. The nation was in good humour ; and the House voted larger supplies in men and money for carrying on the war than had ever been voted in Ireland before. Now the unpleasant rumours became more positive, and assumed more consistence. On the 28th of February, Sir Lawrence Parsons, in his place in Parliament, asked the members opposite if the rumours were true ; but received no answer. Sir Lawrence added, " he was sorry to be obliged to construe the silence of the right honourable and honourable gentlemen into a confirmation of this rumour ; and he deplored most deeply the event, which, at the present time, must tend to throw alarming doubts on the promises, which had been held out to the people, of measures to be adopted for the promotion of their happiness, the conciliation of their minds, and the common attachment of every class of his Majesty's faithful subjects of Ireland, in support of the same happy constitution. If those measures were now to be relinquished, which gentlemen had promised with so much confidence to the country, and on the faith of which, the House had been



called on to vote the enormous sum of £1,700,000, he must consider his country as brought to the most awful and alarming crisis she had ever known in any period of her history."

He then moved an address to his Excellency, entreating him to remain in his government; Mr. Duquerry seconded the motion, and used very strong language with respect to the conduct of Mr. Pitt, "who, not satisfied," he said, "with having involved the country in a disastrous war, intended to complete the mischief by risking the internal peace of Ireland, making that country the dupe of his fraud and artifice, in order to *swindle the nation* out of £1,700,000 to support the war on the faith of measures which it now seemed were to be refused."

And now all proceedings on the Catholic Relief Bill were suspended, by positive orders from England; and as Mr. Grattan had acted in bringing it forward, as a ministerial supporter he could only acquiesce, though with the gloomiest forebodings.

Again, on the 2nd of March, Sir Lawrence Parsons made a very violent speech, severely reprobating the bad faith of the British Cabinet with regard to Lord Fitzwilliam. "But the great object," he said, "of the motion he was about to make was to calm the public mind, to give the people an assurance that the measures which were proposed would not be abandoned; that the Parliament would keep the means in their hands until they were accomplished; and that they would not be prorogued until they were fairly and fully discussed. He did not pretend to say specifically what these measures were. The first he believed to be the Catholic Bill; and if a resistance to any one measure more than another was likely to promote dreadful consequences it was this. He said nothing as to the original propriety of the measure; but this much he would say, that if the Irish administration had countenanced the Catholics in this expectation, without the concurrence of the British Cabinet, they had much to answer for. On the other hand, if the British Cabinet had held out an assent, and had afterwards retracted; if the demon of darkness should come from the infernal regions upon earth, and throw a fire-brand amongst the people, he could not do more to promote mischief. The hopes of the public were raised, and in one instant they were blasted. If the House did not resent that insult to the nation and to themselves, they would in his mind be most contemptible; for although a majority of the people might submit to be mocked in so barefaced a manner, the case was not as formerly, when all the Parliament of Ireland was against the Catholics; and to back them, the force of England." Now, although the claim of the Catholics was well-known and understood, not one petition con-

troverting it had been presented from Protestants in any part of Ireland. No remonstrance appeared, no county meeting had been held. What was to be inferred from all this, but that the sentiments of the Protestants were for the emancipation of the Catholics? A meeting was held on Saturday last, at the Royal Exchange, of the merchants and traders of the metropolis, which was as numerously attended as the limits of that building would admit. The Governor of the Bank of Ireland was in the chair. An address was resolved on to his Excellency Lord Fitzwilliam, full of affection, and resolutions strong as they could be in countenance of the Catholic claim. He would ask them, was the British minister to control all the interests, talents, and inclinations in that country? He protested to God, that in all the history he had read, he had never met with a parallel of such ominous infatuation as that by which he appeared to be led. "Let them persevere," said he, "and you must increase your army to myriads; every man must have five or six dragoons in his house." Sir Lawrence ended with a motion to limit the Money Bill; but this motion was voted down by a large majority. Members could hardly yet believe that so great a villainy was intended. Mr. Conolly, however, remarked "that he would vote for it if he did not hear something satisfactory"—namely about the retention of Lord Fitzwilliam. Within a few days after Lord Fitzwilliam was recalled from Ireland. No more was heard about Catholic Relief for nearly forty years. Lord Camden succeeded as Viceroy, and the country was delivered over to its now inevitable ordeal of slaughter and desolation; an ordeal which, in Mr. Pitt's opinion, was needful to pave the way for the Legislative Union. Mr. Plowden has very truly described the effect of these transactions upon the nation:—

"The report of Earl Fitzwilliam's intended removal was no sooner credited, than an universal despondency, in some instances bordering on desperation, seized the whole nation. Meetings were formed throughout the kingdom, in order to convey to their beloved and respected Governor, their high sense of his virtue and patriotism, and their just indignation at his and their country's enemies. The deep and settled spirit of discontent which at this time pervaded all ranks of people, was not confined to the Catholics. The Dissenters and as many of the Protestants of the establishment, as had not an interest in that monopoly of power and influence, which Earl Fitzwilliam had so openly attacked and so fearfully alarmed, felt the irresistible effect; all good Irishmen beheld with sorrow and indignation, the reconciliation of all parties, interests, and religions, defeated, the cup of national union

dashed from their eager lips, and the spirit of discord let loose upon the kingdom with an enlarged commission to inflame, aggravate, and destroy. Such were the feelings, and such the language of those who deplored the removal of that nobleman, in the critical moment of giving peace, strength, and prosperity to their country. And how large a part of the Irish nation lamented the loss of their truly patriotic Governor, may be read in the numberless addresses and resolutions that poured in upon him both before and after his actual departure, expressive of their grief, despair, and indignation at that ominous event. They came from every description of persons, but from Right Boys, Defenders, and the old dependants upon the castle." The people of Ireland, of all sects and classes, seemed seized with a sudden undefined horror at the prospects before them. They saw that a great opportunity was lost. And they had no mortal quarrel with one another, save the quarrel always made for them, always forced on them, by an English minister sitting safe in his Cabinet at Westminster. Many on both sides who were destined soon to meet in deadly struggle could have prayed that this cup might pass. On the 25th of March, 1795, Lord Fitzwilliam took his departure from Ireland, when the resentment, grief, and indignation of the public were most strongly marked. It was a day of general gloom: the shops were shut; no business of any kind was transacted, and the whole city put on mourning. His coach was drawn to the water side by some of the most respectable citizens, and cordial sorrow appeared on every countenance. The reception of Earl Camden, who arrived in Dublin five days after, wore a very different complexion; displeasure appeared generally: many strong traits of disapprobation were exhibited, and some of the populace were so outrageous, that it became necessary to call out a military force in order to quell the disturbances that ensued.

Still the rage for meetings and addresses continued. On the 9th of April a most numerous and respectable meeting of the Catholics was had in their chapel in Francis-street, to receive the report of their delegates, who had presented their petition at St. James's: when Mr. Keogh reported, that in execution of their mission, they had on the 13th of March presented their petition to his Majesty, and had received what was generally termed a gracious reception. That they had afterwards felt it their duty to request an audience with the Duke of Portland, the Secretary of State for the Home Department, to receive such information as he should think fit to impart relative to his Majesty's determination on the subject of their address. That his grace declined giving any information whatever, save that his Majesty had imparted his pleasure



thereon to the Lord Lieutenant, and that he was the proper channel through which that information should pass. Here their mission was determined. Mr. Keogh continued to deliver his sentiments upon the critical situation of affairs, and amongst many strong things, which fell from him, one observation gave particular offence to Government. He was not, he said, sorry that the measure had been attempted, though it had been defeated: for it pointed out one fact at least, in which the feelings of every Irishman were interested, and by which the Irish Legislature would be roused to a sense of its own dignity. It showed that the internal regulations of Ireland, to which alone an Irish Parliament was competent, were to be previously adjusted by a British Cabinet. Whilst this debate was going on, a very large party of the young men of the College came into the chapel, and were most honourably received. Some of them joined in the debate. They came that hour from presenting an address to Mr. Grattan, to thank and congratulate him upon his patriotic efforts in the cause of Catholic Emancipation, and the reform of those abuses, which had inflamed public indignation, to which Mr. Grattan made an appropriate answer. Every patriotic Irishman must look back with unavailing regret to the lost opportunity, or rather to the cruel deception, of Lord Fitzwilliam's short administration. There was really at that moment a disposition to bury the hatchet of strife. At no subsequent period, down to this day, were the two nations which make up the Irish population, so well disposed to amalgamate and unite. But that did not suit the exigencies of British policy. There was to be an insurrection, in order that there might be a Legislative Union. In this same eventful year of 1795, British policy was materially aided by a new and portentous institution—the *Orange Society*. The recall of Lord Fitzwilliam, and the absolute and most inevitable despair of obtaining either Reform of Parliament or Catholic Emancipation under the existing order of things, had driven vast numbers of the people, of both religions, into the United Irish Society. A spirit of union and fraternity was spreading fast. "Then," says Mr. Plowden, "the gentlemen in place became frightfully alarmed for their situations; active agents were sent down to Armagh, to turn the ferocity and fanaticism of the *Peep-of-Day Boys* into a religious contest with the Catholics, under the specious appearance of zeal for Church and King. Personal animosity was artfully converted into religious rancour; and for the specious purpose of taking off the stigma of delinquency, the appellation of *Peep-of-Day Boys* was changed into that of *Orangemen*." It was in the northern part of Armagh County that this bloody association originated,

and Mr. Thomas Verner enjoyed the bad eminence of being its first "Grand Master." Their test is said to have been:—"In the awful presence of Almighty God, I, A. B., do solemnly swear, that I will, to the utmost of my power, support the King and the present Government; and I do further swear, that I will use my utmost exertions to exterminate all the Catholics of the kingdom of Ireland." But this oath, being secret, has latterly been denied by the Orangemen of respectability and consequence. It has been generally credited, that it was taken by all the original lodges, and continued afterwards to be taken by the lower classes. The Orange oath is given in the above terms in a pamphlet published in 1797, called "A View of the Present State of Ireland," which is attributed to Arthur O'Connor. But whatever may have been the original form of engagement, or however it may have since been changed by more politic "Grand Masters," nothing is more certain than that the Orange Society did immediately and most seriously apply themselves to the task of exterminating the Catholics. There is quite as little doubt that this shocking society was encouraged by the Government, and by most of the magistrates and country-gentlemen to keep alive religious animosity, and prevent the spread of the United Irish organization. An union of Irishmen, upon the just, liberal, and fraternal basis of this organization, would have rendered impossible that other "Union" on which Mr. Pitt had set his heart—the Union of Ireland with England. The recall of Lord Fitzwilliam and the arrival of Lord Camden gave the signal for the bloody anarchy, through which Ireland was doomed to pass for the next four years, and which, it was deliberately calculated, was to end in her extinction as a nation.

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## CHAPTER XXIX.

1795—1797.

THE chief object of the Government and its agents was now to invent and disseminate fearful rumours of intended massacres of all the Protestant people by the Catholics. Dr. Madden says:—"Efforts were made to infuse into the mind of the Protestant feelings of distrust to his Catholic fellow-countrymen. Popish plots and conspiracies were fabricated with a practical facility, which some influential authorities conceived it no degradation to stoop to; and alarming reports of these dark confederations were circulated with a restless assiduity." The effects were soon

apparent in the atrocities committed by the Orangemen in Armagh, and by the magistrates and military in other counties. The persecuted “Defenders” of Armagh made some feeble attempts to protect themselves, though almost without arms. This resistance led to the transaction called the “Battle of the Diamond,” near the village of that name, on the 21st of September, 1795. Several writers have alleged that the Catholics invited this conflict by a challenge sent to the Orangemen. Of course, the latter, having abundance of arms, and being sure of the protection of the magistrates, were not slow to accept such an invitation; but nothing can be more absurd than to term the affair a battle. Not one of the Orange party was killed or wounded. Four or five Defenders were killed, and a proportionate number wounded; and this is the glorious battle that has been toasted at Orange banquets from that day to the present. Mr. Emmet\* thus describes the transaction:—“The Defenders were speedily defeated with the loss of some few killed and left on the field of battle, besides the wounded, whom they carried away. . . . The Catholics, after this, never attempted to make a stand, but the Orangemen commenced a persecution of the blackest dye. They would no longer permit a Catholic to exist in the country. They posted up on the cabins of these unfortunate victims this pithy notice, “To Hell or Connaught;” and appointed a limited time in which the necessary removal of persons and property was to be made. If, after the expiration of that period, the notice had not been complied with, the Orangemen assembled, destroyed the furniture, burned the habitations, and forced the ruined families to fly elsewhere for shelter.” Mr. Emmet adds, “While these outrages were going on, the resident magistrates were not found to resist them, and in some instances were even more than inactive spectators.” Dr. Madden has preserved and printed a number of the “notices,” ill-spelled, but sufficiently intelligible, which were posted on the cabin doors. But the Orangemen by no means confined themselves to mere forcible ejection of their enemies. Many fearful murders were committed on the unresisting people; and what gives perhaps the clearest idea of the persecution is the fact that *seven thousand* persons were estimated in the next year to have been either killed or driven from their homes in that one small county alone.† But the unhappy outcasts, even when they

\* Pieces of Irish History.

† Mr. Plowden, who is as hostile to the Defenders as any Orangeman, says from five to seven thousand. O'Connor, Emmet, and MacNeven, in their Memoirs of the Union, say “seven thousand driven from their homes.”



escaped with their lives, had no shelter to fly to. In most cases they could only wander on the mountains until either death relieved them, or they were arrested and imprisoned; while the younger men were sent without ceremony, to one of the "tenders," then lying in various seaports, and thence transferred on board British men-of-war. This was the device originally of Lord Carhampton, then commanding in Ireland. It was called a "vigour beyond the law," a delicate phrase which has since come very much into use to describe outrages committed by magistrates *against* the law. During all the rest of this year the greater part of Leinster, with portions of Ulster and Munster, were in the utmost terror and agony; the Orange magistrates, aided by the troops, arresting and imprisoning, without any charge, multitudes of unoffending people, under one pretext or another. It is right to present a sample of the story as told by "loyal men." Thus, then, the matter is represented by Sir Richard Musgrave, p. 145:—"Lord Carhampton, finding that the laws were silent and inoperative in the counties which he visited, and that they did not afford protection to the loyal and peaceable subjects, *who in most places were obliged to fly from their habitations*, resolved to restore them to their usual energy, by the following salutary system of severity:—"In each county he assembled the most respectable gentlemen and landholders in it, and having, in concert with them, examined the charges against the leaders of this banditti, who were in prison, but defied justice, he, with the concurrence of these gentlemen, sent the most nefarious of them on board a tender, stationed at Sligo, to serve in his Majesty's navy." There is no doubt that great numbers of people were obliged to fly from their habitations; but then these were the very people whom Lord Carhampton and the magistrates called banditti, and sent to the tender as "nefarious." Such is, however, a specimen of the history of these times as told upon Orange authority.

In the midst of these painful scenes, Parliament assembled on the 21st of January, 1796. Lord Camden, in his speech from the throne, congratulated them on "the brilliant successes of the Austrian armies upon the Rhine;" and then, alluding to dangerous secret societies, he intimated that certain additional powers would be called for; in other words, martial law. The Attorney-General lost no time in bringing forward an Insurrection Act and an Indemnity Act—the latter being for the purpose of indemnifying magistrates and military officers against the consequences of any of their illegal outrages upon the people.

Mr. Curran wished to know the extent and nature of that

delinquency, which it was intended to indemnify ; when Mr. M. Beresford observed, the word *delinquency* was not applicable to the persons intended ; a part of the country was alarmingly disturbed ; the magistrates and others invested with power had, in order to prevent the necessity of proclaiming martial law universally, acted in that particular district, as if martial law were proclaimed : this conduct, so far from being delinquency, was justifiable and laudable, and of happy consequence in the event.

On the 28th of the month, the Attorney-General adverted to the notice he had given on the first night of the session, of his intention of bringing in two bills : the object of one of them was for preventing in future insurrections, and tumults, and riots in this kingdom ; and the object of the other bill was, to indemnify certain magistrates and others, who, in their exertions for the preservation of the public tranquillity, might have acted *against the forms and rules of law* ; he stated that the bill for the more effectually preventing of insurrections, tumults, and riots, by persons styling themselves Defenders, and other disorderly persons, was, however, repugnant to his feelings.

He said, that the act then in force for administering unlawful oaths was not sufficiently strong, and the administering of unlawful oaths was the source of all the treasonable actions which had taken place in the country : the bill proposed, that the administering of unlawful oaths should be felony of death ; but he would propose, that that bill should be but a temporary law ; there was also a clause in the bill to enable the magistrates, at the quarter sessions, to take up all idle vagrants and persons who had no visible means of earning a livelihood, and send them to serve on board the fleet ; he said he did not propose to hurry this bill through the House, but give time for the consideration, as it might be necessary to add much, and make several alterations. He then moved for leave "to bring in a bill for the more effectual prevention of insurrections, tumults, and riots, by persons styling themselves Defenders, and other disorderly persons ;" and leave was given to bring in the bill. Then he moved for leave "to bring in a bill for indemnifying such magistrates and others, who might have, since the 1st of January, 1795, exceeded the ordinary forms and rules of law for the preservation of the public peace and suppression of insurrection prevailing in some parts of this kingdom."

There was earnest opposition against these two bills, but without effect ; they were both passed into laws ; and they had the effect, which they were certainly intended to have, of exciting, or at least hastening, the insurrection of 1798. It is observable

that the motive assigned by the Government officials for passing these laws was always the outrages and alleged secret associations of *Defenders*. Not a word was said about the real outrages and exterminating oaths of Orangemen. Indeed, the measures in question were really directed not against either Defenders or Orangemen, but against the United Irishmen, the only association of which the Government had the slightest fear. Beside the two bills, the Attorney-General proposed four supplemental resolutions asserting the necessity of giving enlarged powers to magistrates to search for arms and to make arrests. On the reading of these resolutions, Mr. Grattan observed, that he had heard the right honourable gentleman's statement, and did not suppose it to be inflamed; but he must observe at the same time it was partial; he did, indeed, expatiate very fully and justly on the offences of the Defenders; but with respect to another description of insurgents, whose barbarities had excited general abhorrence, he had observed a complete silence; that he had proceeded to enumerate the counties that were afflicted by disturbances, and he had omitted Armagh;—of that, neither had he comprehended the outrages in his general description, nor in his particular enumeration: of those outrages, he had received the most dreadful accounts; that their object was the extermination of all the Catholics of that county; it was a persecution conceived in the bitterness of bigotry, carried on with the most ferocious barbarity, by a banditti, who being of the religion of the State, had committed with the greater audacity and confidence, the most horrid murders, and had proceeded from robbery and massacre to extermination; that they had repealed, by their own authority, all the laws lately passed in favour of the Catholics, had established in the place of those laws, the inquisition of a mob, resembling Lord George Gordon's fanatics, equalling them in outrage, and surpassing them far in perseverance and success.

That their modes of outrage were as various as they were atrocious; they sometimes forced by terror, the masters of families to dismiss their Catholic servants—they sometimes forced landlords, by terror, to dismiss their Catholic tenantry—they seized as deserters, numbers of Catholic weavers—sent them to the county jail, transmitted them to Dublin, where they remained in close prison, until some lawyers, from compassion, pleaded their cause, and procured their enlargement, nothing appearing against them of any kind whatsoever. Those insurgents, who called themselves Orange Boys, or Protestant Boys, that is, a banditti of murderers, committing massacre in the name of God, and exercising despotic power in the name of liberty—those



insurgents had organized their rebellion, and formed themselves into a committee, who sat and tried the Catholic weavers and inhabitants, when apprehended falsely and illegally as deserters. That rebellious committee, they called the committee of elders, who, when the unfortunate Catholic was torn from his family and his loom, and brought before them, in judgment upon his case—if he gave them liquor or money, they sometimes discharged him—otherwise they sent him to a recruiting office as a deserter. They had very generally given the Catholics notice to quit their farms and dwellings, which notice was plastered on the house, and conceived in these short but plain words: “Go to Hell, Connaught won’t receive you—fire and faggot. Will Thresham and John Thrustout.” That they followed these notices by a faithful and punctual execution of the horrid threat—soon after visited the house, robbed the family, and destroyed what they did not take, and finally completed the atrocious persecutions by forcing the unfortunate inhabitants to leave their land, their dwellings, and their trade, and to travel with their miserable family, and with whatever their miserable family could save from the wreck of their houses and tenements, and take refuge in villages, as fortifications against invaders, where they described themselves, as he had seen in their affidavits, in the following manner:—“We, (mentioning their names), formerly of Armagh, weavers, now of no fixed place of abode or means of living, &c.” In many instances this banditti of persecution threw down the houses of the tenantry, or what they called racked the House, so that the family must fly or be buried in the grave of their own cabin. The extent of the murders that had been committed by that atrocious and rebellious banditti he had heard, but had not heard them so ascertained as to state them to that House; but from all the inquiries he could make, he collected, that the Catholic inhabitants of Armagh had been actually put out of the protection of the law; that the magistrates had been supine or partial, and that the horrid banditti had met with complete success and, from the magistracy, with very little discouragement. This horrid persecution, this abominable barbarity, and this general extermination had been acknowledged by the magistrates, who found the evil had now proceeded to so shameful an excess, that it had at length obliged them to cry out against it. On the 28th of December, thirty of the magistrates had come to the following resolution, which was evidence of the designs of the insurgents, and of their success:—“*Resolved*, That it appears to this meeting, that the County of Armagh is at this moment in a state of uncommon disorder; that the Roman Catholic inhabitants are

grievously oppressed by lawless persons unknown, who attack and plunder their houses by night, and threaten them with instant destruction, unless they abandon immediately their lands and habitations."

The "Insurrection Act" was intended to give magistrates most unlimited powers to arrest and imprison, and search houses for arms; the other act, called of "Indemnity," was an actual invitation to break the law. Mr. Grattan, whose speeches, more than any records or documents, illustrate this period of the history of his country, commenting on this latter act, says:—"A bill of indemnity went to secure the offending magistrates against the consequences of their outrages and illegalities; that is to say, in our humble conception, the poor were stricken out of the protection of the law, and the rich out of its penalties; and then another bill was passed to give such lawless proceedings against his Majesty's subjects continuation, namely, a bill to enable the magistrates to perpetrate by law, those offences which they had before committed against it—a bill to legalize outrage, to barbarize law, and to give the law itself the cast and colour of outrage. By such a bill, the magistrates were enabled, without legal process, to send on board a tender his Majesty's subjects, and the country was divided into two classes, or formed into two distinct nations, living under the same King, and inhabiting the same island; one consisting of the King's magistrates, and the other of the King's subjects; the former without restraint, and the latter without privilege."

Both the bills passed; but amongst those who opposed them to the last in the House of Commons, by the side of Mr. Grattan and Sir Lawrence Parsons, it is with pleasure that one finds the honoured name of Lord Edward Fitzgerald. The debates on these bills and resolutions furnish perhaps the most authentic documents for the history of the time, and especially for the lawless outrages which were then devastating the North of Ireland. One of the Attorney-General's resolutions spoke of the necessity of punishing persons who "seized by force the arms of his Majesty's subjects." Mr. Grattan moved an amendment to add "and also the persons of his Majesty's subjects, and to force them to abandon their lands and habitations;" and in the third resolution, after the words "murdering those who had spirit to give information," to add, "also attempting to seize the persons, and obliging his Majesty's subjects, by force, to abandon their lands and habitations."

But the amendment, as it evidently contemplated the protection of the unhappy Catholics of Armagh County, was opposed by the Attorney-General, and rejected as a matter of course.

One of the clauses of the "Insurrection Act" was vehemently, but vainly, opposed by Sir Lawrence Parsons : it was to empower any two magistrates to seize upon persons who should publish or sell a newspaper or pamphlet which they, the two magistrates, should deem seditious, and without any form of trial to send them on board the fleet. This was a total annihilation of the Press, saving only the Castle Press.

When it is recollected that the magistracy and Protestant country gentlemen of Ireland were at that time inflamed with the most furious rage against their Catholic countrymen, and were besides purposely excited by rumours of intended Popish risings for the extirpation of Protestants (which many of them, in their ignorance believed), it will be seen what a terrible power these acts conferred upon them. They naturally conceived, and very justly, that the law now made it a merit on their part to *break* the law, provided it were done to the oppression and ruin of the Catholic people; and felt that they were turned loose with a full commission to burn, slay, rob, and ravish. It will be seen that they largely availed themselves of these privileges. There was but one thing now wanted; and this was the suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* act. This was supplied in the next Session of Parliament, which took place on the 13th of October; and from that moment Ireland stood utterly stripped naked of all law and government.

In the meantime the United Irish Society had been steadily increasing and busily labouring and negotiating. Some valuable members had lately joined it, in despair of any peaceable or constitutional remedy. The chief of these was the generous and gallant Lord Edward Fitzgerald, brother to the then Duke of Leinster, formerly a major in the British army, and who had served under Cornwallis against the Americans. Since his return to Europe he had several times visited the Continent, and mingled much with revolutionary society in France. Having seen so much of the world, he was not so ignorant and stupid as were most of the Irish gentry at that period; and his natural nobility of soul was revolted by the brutal usage to which he saw his countrymen subjected at the hands of the "Ascendancy." It is probable, too, that he, the descendant of an ancient Gallo-Hibernian house, settled in Ireland more than six centuries, which had given chiefs to the ancient Clan-Geralt, and had been called "more Irish than the Irish," had far more sympathy with the Irish race than the mob of Cromwellian and Williamite grandees who then ruled the country. Arthur O'Connor was another valuable accession to the ranks of the United Irishmen. He was also highly connected,



though by no means equally so with Lord Edward; but he was nephew of Lord Lengueville, had sat in Parliament for Philips-town, and had laboured zealously for a time on the forlorn hope of the opposition, by the side of Grattan and Curran. Another was Thomas Addis Emmet, a barrister, a warm friend of Wolf Tone, who had been long intimately associated in principle with the leaders of the United Irish Association, and had been privy to the design of Tone, to negotiate a French alliance; a fourth was Dr. William James Mac Neven, a physician in Dublin, originally of Galway County, but who had been educated on the Continent, as most of the young professional men among the Catholics then were. These four became members of the "Executive Directory" of the United Irish Society; and Lord Edward Fitzgerald, when its military organization was formed, was made Commander-in-Chief. It was after the passage of the Insurrection and Indemnity Acts, and in the recess between the two Sessions of Parliament of 1796, that the United Irishmen began to make definitive preparations for armed resistance.\*

Theobald Wolfe Tone was now in Paris, having arrived at Havre the 1st of February, 1796, bearing a letter of introduction to Charles De la Croix, Minister for Foreign Affairs, from the French Envoy at Philadelphia. He had another letter to James Munroe, then the representative of the United States in Paris, who very kindly guided him in his proceedings to gain the ear of the French authorities. He had several interviews with De la Croix, with Clarke (who was afterwards Duc de Feltre), and, what was of more importance, with the illustrious Carnot, Chief of the Executive Directory, who really himself controlled at that moment the movements of all the French armies. The journal kept by Tone during the remainder of that year, is at times very entertaining, and again extremely affecting—especially where he records the few pieces of intelligence which reached him from Ireland in those days of interrupted communications. For example, one day at Rennes, he writes:—"October 29th.—This morning before we set out, General Harty sent for me, and showed me an English paper that he had just borrowed, the *Morning Post*, of September 24th, in which was an article copied from the *Northern Star* of the 16th precedent. By this unfortunate article, I see that what I have long expected, with the greatest

\* See examination of Arthur O'Connor before the Secret Committee of the House of Lords: Com.—When did the military organization begin? O'Connor—Shortly after the Executive had resolved on resistance to the Irish Government, and on an alliance with France in May, 1796.

anxiety is come to pass. My dear friends, Russell and Sam. Neilson, were arrested for high treason on that day, together with Rowley Osborne, Haslett, and a person, whom I do not know, of the name of Shanaghan. The persons who arrested them were the Marquis of Downshire, the Earl of Westmeath, and Lord Londonderry, together with that most infamous of all scoundrels, John Pollock. It is impossible to conceive the effect this heavy misfortune has upon my mind. If we are not in Ireland time enough to extricate them, they are gone ; for the Government will move heaven, earth, and hell, to insure their condemnation. Good God ! If they fall—”

His progress in negotiating for substantial aid from France had at first been slow, and sometimes looked discouraging. He was required to draw up two “memorials” upon the state and resources of Ireland, for the Government ; and in these memorials, and in the conversations which he records, with Clarke and Carnot, it is chiefly important to remark, that he always pressed urgently for a large force, such as would enable the chiefs of the United Irishmen at once to establish a provisional government, and prevent anarchy ; that he strenuously opposed a recommendation of Clarke, for exciting both in England and Ireland a species of *chouannerie*, or mere peasant insurrection, with no other object than to create confusion, and operate as a diversion. Tone admitted that it might be natural and justifiable for the French to retaliate in this way, what the English had done to them in La Vendée ; but his own object was the independence of his country, which, he rightly thought, would not be served by mere riot and confusion. We find also in these notes that Clarke and Carnot several times questioned him about the dispositions of the Catholic clergy, and how they might be expected to act in case of a landing. He always replied that no reliance could be placed upon the clergy at first, especially if the expedition were not in sufficient force to put down quickly all resistance ; that they were opposed to republicanism and revolution, but if the French went in sufficient force the clergy neither would nor could give serious opposition to the liberation of his country.

While Tone was labouring through these summer months to get those ministers impressed with his own ideas, and wondering at their hesitation, when it was in their power to deal a mortal blow upon English power, another negotiation was going on, which at the time was unknown to him. It is stated in the Report of the Lords’ Secret Committee, hereafter to be cited, that the agent of the United Irishmen in this second negotiation was Edward John Lewins, an attorney in Dublin ; but this is prob-

ably an error. At all events, it is certain that the French Directory was at that moment in correspondence with the Irish chiefs through other channels than Wolfe Tone ; and that Lord Edward Fitzgerald and Arthur O'Connor had come to Switzerland by way of Hamburgh to meet agents of the Directory ; and General Hoche had repaired to Basle, just over the French frontier, to confer with those gentlemen. In deciding upon so vast an armament, the Ministers of the French Republic were certainly justified in procuring all possible authentic information about Ireland ; and in checking the memorials of Tone by the reports of other well-known leaders of the United Irishmen. They had incautiously opened their negotiations with the Directory through the medium of M. Barthelemi, of whose integrity they had no suspicion ; and Dr. Madden informs us that by this error "they at once placed the secret of their mission in the sympathising bosom of Mr. William Pitt."\* The Secret Committee of the Lords, indeed, in 1798, details the negotiation with perfect correctness, and hints at the means by which the expedition was frustrated. Howsoever that may be, it is evident that the reports of Lord E. Fitzgerald and Arthur O'Connor respecting their friend Wolfe Tone were in all respects satisfactory. The next time he was in the Cabinet of General Clarke, on his expressing a wish to be enabled to write to his friends, to tell them he was alive and well at Paris, Clarke, says the journal, answered, "'As to that, your friends know it already.' I replied, 'Not that I knew of.' He answered, 'Aye, but I know it, but cannot tell you at present how.' He then went on to tell me he did not know how to explain himself further, 'for,' added he, 'If I tell you ever so little, you will guess the rest.' So it seems I am a cunning fox, without knowing it. He gave me, however, to understand that he had a communication open with Ireland, and showed me a paper, asking me did I know the handwriting. I did not. He then read a good deal. It stated very briefly, that fourteen of the counties, including the entire North, were completely organized for the purpose of throwing off the English yoke and establishing our independence ; that, in the remaining eighteen, the organization was advancing rapidly, and that it was so arranged that the inferiors obeyed their leaders, without examining their orders, or even knowing who they were, as every one knew only the person immediately above him. That the militia were about 20,000 men, 17,000 of whom might be relied on, that there were about 12,000 regular troops, wretched bad ones, who would soon be settled in case the busi-

\* *Madden's United Irishmen*, 2d series, p. 390.



ness were attempted, Clarke was going on, but was stopped here suddenly, and said, laughing, 'There is something there which I cannot read to you, or you will guess.' I begged him to use his discretion without ceremony. He then asked me, did I know of this organization? I replied that I could not, with truth, say positively I knew it, but that I had no manner of doubt of it; that it was now twelve months exactly since I left Ireland, in which time I was satisfied, much must have been done in that country, and that he would find in my memorials that such an organization was then begun, was rapidly spreading, and, I had no doubt, would soon embrace the whole people. It is curious, the coincidence between the paper he read me and those I have given here, though, upon second thought, as truth is uniform, it would be still more extraordinary if they should vary. I am delighted beyond measure with the progress which has been made in Ireland since my banishment. I see they are advancing rapidly and safely, and, personally, nothing can be more agreeable to me than this coincidence between what I have said and written, and the accounts which I see they receive here. The paper also stated, as I had done, that we wanted arms, ammunition, and artillery; in short, it was as exact, in all particulars, as if the same person had written all. This ascertains my credit in France beyond a doubt. Clarke then said, as to my business, he was only waiting for letters from General Hoche, in order to settle it finally; that I should have a regiment of cavalry, and, it was probable, it might be fixed that day; that the arrangement of the forces intended for the expedition was intrusted to Hoche, by which I see we shall go from Brittany instead of Holland. All's one for that, provided we go at all."

A few days after this, and just when poor Tone was almost in his last straits for money, he was sent for to the Luxembourg Palace, and there, in the Cabinet of M. Fleury, a very handsome young man came up to him very warmly, seemed to have known him all his life, and introduced himself as General Hoche—the most rising man at that moment among the young military chiefs of the Republic. It was he who had had the honour of defending Dunkirk successfully against the English, and afterwards of defeating utterly the Vendean force, equipped and armed by the same English, and landed at Quiberon under the guns of Admiral Warren's fleet. In short, it was against the English he had done most of his service, and he coveted the privilege of commanding the formidable expedition which was now fully resolved on for the liberation of Ireland. He informed Tone that the latter was to be attached to his personal staff, with the grade of *Chef-de-*

*Brigade.* At last, then, the grand object of Wolfe Tone's life and labours seemed on the point of being attained. He was delighted with Hoche, who quite agreed with him in his views of the scale on which the expedition should be made, and of the necessity of proceeding by the laws of regular warfare, not of *chouannerie*. For the due comprehension of the true intent and aims of this celebrated expedition we may here give a passage from Tone's record of his conference with its chief :—

“ He asked me in case of a landing being effectuated, might he rely on finding provisions, and particularly bread? I said it would be impossible to make any arrangements in Ireland, previous to the landing, because of the *surveillance* of the Government, but if that were once accomplished, there would be no want of provisions; that Ireland abounded in cattle, and, as for bread, I saw by the *Gazette* that there was not only no deficiency of corn, but that she was able to supply England, in a great degree, during the late alarming scarcity in that country, and I assured him, that if the French were once in Ireland, he might rely that, whoever wanted bread, they should not want it. He seemed satisfied with this, and proceeded to ask me, might we count upon being able to form a provisory Government, either of the Catholic Committee, mentioned in my memorials, or of the chiefs of the Defenders? I thought I saw an open here, to come at the number of troops intended for us, and replied, that that would depend on the force which might be landed; if that force were but trifling, I could not pretend to say how they might act, but if it was considerable, I had no doubt of their co-operation. ‘Undoubtedly,’ replied he, ‘men will not sacrifice themselves, when they do not see a reasonable prospect of support; but, if I go, you may be sure I will go in sufficient force.’ He then asked, did I think ten thousand men would decide them? I answered, undoubtedly, but that early in the business the Minister had spoken to me of two thousand, and that I had replied that such a number could effect nothing. No, replied he, they would be overwhelmed before any one could join them. I replied, I was glad to hear him give that opinion, as it was precisely what I had stated to the Minister, and I repeated that, with the force he mentioned, I could have no doubt of support and co-operation sufficient to form a provisory Government. He then asked me what I thought of the priests, or was it likely they would give us any trouble? I replied I certainly did not calculate on their assistance, but neither did I think they would be able to give us any effectual opposition; that their influence over the minds of the common people was exceedingly diminished of late, and I

instanced the case of the Defenders, so often mentioned in my memorials, and in these memorandums. I explained all this, at some length, to him, and concluded by saying, that, in prudence, we should avoid as much as possible shocking their prejudices unnecessarily, and that, with common discretion, I thought we might secure their neutrality at least, if not their support. I mentioned this merely as my opinion, but added that, in the contrary event, I was satisfied it would be absolutely impossible for them to take the people out of our hands. We then came to the army. He asked me how I thought they would act? I replied, for the regulars I could not pretend to say, but that they were wretched bad troops; for the militia, I hoped and believed that when we were once organized, they would not only not oppose us, but come over to the cause of their country *en masse*; nevertheless, I desired him to calculate on their opposition, and make his arrangements accordingly; that it was the safe policy, and if it become necessary, it was so much gained. He said he would, undoubtedly, make his arrangements so as to leave nothing to chance that could be guarded against; that he would come in force, and bring great quantities of arms, ammunition, stores, and artillery, and, for his own reputation, see that all the arrangements were made on a proper scale. I was very glad to hear him speak thus; it sets my mind at ease on diverse points. He then said there was one important point remaining, on which he desired to be satisfied, and that was what form of Government we would adopt on the event of our success? I was going to answer him with great earnestness, when General Clarke entered, to request we would come to dinner with citizen Carnot. We, accordingly, adjourned the conversation to the apartment of the President, where we found Carnot, and one or two more. Hoche, after some time, took me aside and repeated his question. I replied, 'Most undoubtedly, a republic.' He asked again, 'Was I sure?' I said, as sure as I could be of anything; that I knew nobody in Ireland who thought of any other system, nor did I believe there was anybody who dreamt of monarchy. He asked me was there no danger of the Catholics setting up one of their chiefs for King? I replied, 'Not the smallest,' and that there were no chiefs amongst them of that kind of eminence. This is the old business again, but I believe I satisfied Hoche; it looks well to see him so anxious on that topic, on which he pressed me more than on all the others."

From this time preparations were pushed forward with more or less activity; but by no means fast enough to satisfy the ardent spirit of Tone. The rendezvous for the troops was



appointed at Rennes, the old capital of Bretagne; while the fleet, consisting of ships of war and transports, was getting ready at Brest. During the several months which intervened, as news occasionally came in from Ireland, telling of the systematic outrages on the country people, and new arrests and measures of "vigour beyond the law," his anxiety and impatience redoubled. On the 28th of July he writes:—"I see the Orange Boys are playing the devil in Ireland. *I have no doubt it is the work of the Government.* Please God, if I get safe into that country, I will settle those gentlemen, and their instigators also more especially." Again, late in August, he writes:—

"The news, at least the report of to-day, is, that Richery and the Spaniards are before Lisbon, and that a French army is in full march across Spain, in order to enter Portugal; that would be a blow to Master John Bull fifty times worse than the affair of Leghorn. Why the unhappy Portuguese did not make their peace at the same time with Spain, I cannot conceive, except, as was most probably the case, they durst not consult their own safety for fear of offending the English. What an execrable nation that is, and how cordially I hate them. If this affair of Portugal is true, there will not remain one port friendly to England from Hamburgh to Trieste, and probably much further both ways. It is impossible she can stand this long. Well, if the visitation of Providence be sometimes slow, it is always sure. If our expedition succeeds, I think we will give her the *coup de grace*, and make her pay dear for the rivers of blood she has made to flow in our poor country, her massacres, her pillages, and her frauds, '*Alors ce sera notre tour.*' We shall see! We shall see! Oh that I were, this fine morning, at the head of my regiment on the Cave Hill! Well, all in good time."

And still the time flew, while innumerable causes of delay interfered with the despatch of the fleet. And in the meantime Camden and Carhampton's reign of terror was in full sway, goading the people to desperation; and the fiery *Chef-de-Brigade* gnawing his own heart in Paris, or in Rennes.

At last, but not until the 15th of December, all was on board. The troops were to have amounted to 15,000 men, but they were actually 13,975 men, with an abundance of artillery and ammunition, and arms for 45,000 men. Tone was on board the line-of-battle ship *Indomptable*, of 80 guns. There were on the whole 17 sail of the line, 13 frigates, 5 corvettes, making, with transports, 43 sail. General Hoche and the Admiral in command of the fleet were on board a frigate; and the second General in command, of the land forces was, unfortunately—*Grouchy*—of unlucky memory.

A wretched fatality was upon this fine expedition from the very start. The first night it was at sea it lost both its chiefs ; as the *Fraternité* frigate was separated from the others, and they never saw more of it until after they had returned to France. An extract, somewhat condensed, from Wolfe Tone's diary, may form the most interesting account of the fortunes and fates of the Bantry Bay Expedition :—

“Admiral Morand de Galles, General Hoche, General Debelle, and Colonel Shee, are aboard the *Fraternité*, and God knows what has become of them. The wind, too, continues against us, and, altogether, I am in terrible low spirits. How if these damned English should catch us at last, after having gone on successfully thus far. Our force leaving Brest water was as follows :—Indomptable, 80 guns ; Nestor, Cassard, Droits de l'Homme, Tourville, Eole, Fougueux, Mucius, Redoubtable, Patriote, Pluton, Constitution, Trajan, Watigny, Pegase, Revolution, and the unfortunate *Séduisant*, of 74 guns (17 sail of the line) ; La Cocarde, Bravoure, Immortalité, Bellone, Coquille, Romaine, Sirene, Impatiente, Surveillante, Charente, Resolue, Tartare, and *Fraternité*, frigates of 36 guns (13 frigates) ; Scevola and Fidele armés en flutes, Mutine, Renard, Atalante, Voltigeur, and Affronteur, corvettes, and Nicodeme, Justine, Ville d'Orient, Suffren, Experiment, and Alegre, transports, making in all 43 sail. Of these there are missing this day, at three o'clock, the Nestor and *Séduisant*, of 74 ; the *Fraternité*, Cocarde, and Romaine, frigates ; the Mutine and Voltigeur, corvettes ; and three other transports.

“*December 20th.*—Last night, in moderate weather, we contrived to separate again, and this morning, at eight o'clock, we are but fifteen sail in company, with a foul wind, and hazy. We shall lie beating about here, within thirty leagues of Cape Clear, until the English come and catch us, which will be truly agreeable. At ten, several sail in sight to windward ; I suppose they are our stray sheep. It is scandalous to part company twice in four days in such moderate weather as we have had, but sea affairs I see are not our *forte*. Captain Bedout is a seaman, which I fancy is more than can be said for nine-tenths of his confreres.

“*December 21st.*—Last night, just at sunset, signal for seven sail in the offing ; all in high spirits, in hopes that it is our comrades ; stark calm all the fore part of the night ; at length a breeze sprung up, and this morning, at day-break, we are under Cape Clear, distant about four leagues, so I have, at all events, once more seen my country ; but the pleasure I should otherwise feel at this, is totally destroyed by the absence of the General, who has not joined us, and of whom we know nothing. The sails

we saw last night have disappeared, and we are all in uncertainty. It is most delicious weather, with a favourable wind, and every thing, in short, that we can desire, except our absent comrades. At the moment I write this we are under easy sail, within three leagues, at most, of the coast, so that I can discover here and there, patches of snow on the mountains. What if the General should not join us. If we cruise here five days, according to our instructions, the English will be upon us, and then all is over. We are thirty-five sail in company, and seven or eight absent. Is that such a separation of our force, as, under all the circumstances, will warrant our following the letter of our orders, to the certain failure of the expedition? If Grouchy and Bouvet be men of spirit and decision, they will land immediately, and trust to their success for justification. If they be not, and if this day passes without our seeing the General, I much fear the game is up. I am in undescribable anxiety, and Cherin, who commands aboard, is a poor creature, to whom it is vain to speak; not but I believe he is brave enough, but he has a little mind. There cannot be imagined a situation more provokingly tantalizing than mine at this moment, within view, almost within reach of my native land, and uncertain whether I shall ever set my foot on it. We are now, nine o'clock, at the rendezvous appointed; stood in for the coast till twelve, when we were near enough to toss a biscuit ashore; at twelve, tacked and stood out again, so now we have begun our cruise of five days in all its forms, and shall, in obedience to the letter of our instructions, ruin the expedition, and destroy the remnant of the French navy, with a precision and punctuality which will be truly edifying. We opened Bantry Bay, and, in all my life, rage, never entered so deeply into my heart as when we turned our backs on the coast. At half after one, the *Atalante*, one of our missing corvettes, hove in sight, so now again we are in hopes to see the General. Oh! if he were in Grouchy's place, he would not hesitate one moment. Continue making short boards; the wind foul.

*"December 22nd.*—This morning, at eight, we have neared Bantry Bay considerably, but the fleet is terribly scattered; no news of the *Fraternité*; I believe it is the first instance of an Admiral in a clean frigate, with moderate weather, and moonlight nights, parting company with his fleet. Captain Grammont, our First Lieutenant, told me his opinion is that she is either taken or lost, and, in either event, it is a terrible blow to us. All rests now upon Grouchy, and I hope he may turn out well; he has a glorious game in his hands, if he has spirit and talent to play it. If he succeeds, it will immortalize him. I do not at all like the



countenance of the Etat Major in this crisis. When they speak of the expedition, it is in a style of despondency, and when they are not speaking of it, they are playing cards and laughing: they are every one of them brave of their persons, but I see nothing of that spirit of enterprise, combined with a steady resolution, which our present situation demands. They stared at me this morning, when I said that Grouchy was the man in the whole army who had least reason to regret the absence of the General, and began to talk of responsibility and difficulties, as if any great enterprise was without responsibility and difficulties. I was burning with rage, however I said nothing, and will say nothing until I get ashore, if ever I am so happy as to arrive there. We are gaining the Bay by slow degrees, with a head wind at east, where it has hung these five weeks. To-night we hope, if nothing extraordinary happens, to cast anchor in the mouth of the Bay, and work up to-morrow morning; these delays are dreadful to my impatience. I am now so near the shore that I can see, distinctly, two old castles, yet I am utterly uncertain whether I shall ever set foot on it. According to appearances, Bouvet and Grouchy are resolved to proceed; that is a great point gained however. Two o'clock; we have been tacking ever since eight this morning, and I am sure we have not gained one hundred yards; the wind is right ahead, and the fleet dispersed, several being far to leeward. I have been looking over the schedule of our arms, artillery, and ammunition; we are well provided: we have 41,160 stand of arms, twenty pieces of field artillery, and nine of siege, including mortars and howitzers; 61,200 barrels of powder, 7,000,000 musket cartridges, and 700,000 flints, besides an infinite variety of articles belonging to the train, but we have neither sabres nor pistols for the cavalry; however, we have nearly three regiments of hussars embarked, so that we can dispense with them. I continue very discreetly to say little or nothing, as my situation just now is rather a delicate one; if we were once ashore, and things turn out to my mind, I shall soon be out of my trammels, and, perhaps, in that respect, I may be better off with Grouchy than with Hoche. If the people act with spirit, as I hope they will, it is no matter who is General, and, if they do not, all the talents of Hoche would not save us; so it comes to the same thing at last. At half-past six, cast anchor off Beer Island, being still four leagues from our landing place; at work with General Cherin, writing and translating proclamations, &c., all our printed papers, including my two pamphlets, being on board the Fraternité, which is pleasant.

*“December 23d.—Last night it blew a heavy gale from the*

eastward, with snow, so that the mountains are covered this morning, which will render our bivouacs extremely amusing. It is to be observed, that of the thirty-two points of the compass, the E. is precisely the most unfavourable to us. In consequence, we are this morning separated for the fourth time; sixteen sail, including nine or ten of the line, with Bouvet and Grouchy, are at anchor with us, and about twenty are blown to sea; luckily the gale set from the shore, so I am in hopes no mischief will ensue. The wind is still high, and, as usual, right ahead; and I dread a visit from the English, and altogether I am in great uneasiness. Oh! that we were once ashore, let what might ensue after; I am sick to the very soul of this suspense. It is curious to see how things are managed in this best of all possible worlds. We are here, sixteen sail, great and small, scattered up and down in a noble bay, and so dispersed that there are not two together in any spot, save one, and there they are now so close, that if it blows to-night as it did last night, they will inevitably run foul of each other, unless one of them prefers driving on shore. We lie in this disorder, expecting a visit from the English every hour, without taking a single step for our defence, even to the common one of having a frigate in the harbour's mouth, to give us notice of their approach; to judge by appearances, we have less to dread here than in Brest water, for when we were there, we had four corvettes stationed off the *goulet*, besides the signal posts. I confess this degree of security passes my comprehension. The day has passed without the appearance of one vessel, friend or enemy, the wind rather more moderate, but still ahead. To-night, on examining the returns with Waudré, Chef d'Etat Major of the artillery, I find our means so reduced by the absence of the missing, that I think it hardly possible to make an attempt here, with any prospect of success; in consequence, I took Cherin into the Captain's room, and told him frankly my opinion of our actual state, and that I thought it our duty, since we must look upon the main object as now unattainable, unless the whole of our friends returned to-morrow and the English gave us our own time, which was hardly to be expected, to see what could be best done for the honour and interest of the republic, with the force which remained in our hands, and I proposed to him to give me the Legion des Francs, a company of the *Artillerie légère*, and as many officers as desired to come volunteers in the expedition, with what arms and stores remained, which are now reduced, by our separation, to four field pieces, 20,000 firelocks at most, 1,000 lbs. of powder, and 3,000,000 cartridges, and to land us in Sligo Bay, and let us make the best of our way; if we succeeded, the

republic would gain infinitely in reputation and interest, and, if we failed, the loss would be trifling, as the expense was already incurred, and as for the legion, he knew what kind of desperadoes it was composed of, and for what purpose; consequently, in the worst event, the republic would be well rid of them; finally, I added, that though I asked the command, it was on the supposition that none of the Generals would risk their reputation on such a desperate enterprise, and that if another was found, I would be content to go as a simple volunteer. This was the outline of my proposal, which I pressed on him with such arguments as occurred to me, concluding by observing that, as a foreigner in the French service, my situation was a delicate one, and if I were simply an officer, I would obey in silence the orders of superiors, but, from my connections in Ireland, having obtained the confidence of the Directory, so far as to induce them to appoint me to the rank of *Chef-de-Brigade*, and of General Hoche, who had nominated me Adjutant-General, I thought it my duty, both to France and Ireland, to speak on this occasion, and that I only offered my plan as a *pis aller*, in case nothing better suggested itself. Cherin answered that I did very right to give my opinion, and that as he expected a council of war would be called to-morrow, he would bring me with him, and I should have an opportunity to press it. The discourse rested there, and to-morrow we shall see more, if we are not agreeably surprised, early in the morning, by a visit from the English, which is highly probable. I am now so near the shore, that I can in a manner touch the sides of Bantry Bay with my right and left hand, yet God knows whether I shall ever tread again on Irish ground. Another thing, we are now three days in Bantry Bay; if we do not land immediately, the enemy will collect a superior force, and, perhaps, repay us our victory of Quiberon. In an enterprise like ours, everything depends upon the promptitude and audacity of our first movements, and we are here, I am sorry to say it, most pitifully languid. It is mortifying, but that is too poor a word; I could tear my flesh with rage and vexation, but that advances nothing, and so I hold my tongue in general, and devour my melancholy as I can. To come so near, and then to fail, if we are to fail! And every one aboard seems now to have given up all hopes.

“*December 24th.*—This morning the whole Etat Major has been miraculously converted, and it was agreed, in full council, that General Cherin, Colonel Waudré, Chef d’Etat Major of the Artillery, and myself, should go aboard the *Immortalité*, and press General Grouchy in the strongest manner to proceed on the



expedition, with the ruins of our scattered army. Accordingly, we made a signal to speak with the Admiral, and in about an hour we were aboard. I must do Grouchy the justice to say, that the moment we gave our opinion in favour of proceeding, he took his part decidedly, and like a man of spirit; he instantly set about preparing the *ordre de bataille*, and we finished without delay. We are not more than 6,500 strong, but they are tried soldiers, who have seen fire, and I have the strongest hopes that, after all, we shall bring our enterprise to a glorious termination. It is a bold attempt, and truly original. All the time we were preparing the *ordre de bataille*, we were laughing most immoderately at the poverty of our means, and I believe, under the circumstances, it was the merriest council of war that was ever held; but '*Des Chevaliers Français tel est le caractère.*' Grouchy, the Commander-in-Chief, never had so few men under his orders since he was Adjutant-General; Waudré, who is lieutenant-colonel, finds himself now at the head of the artillery, which is a furious park, consisting of one piece of eight, one of four, and two of six-inch howitzers; when he was a captain, he never commanded fewer than ten pieces, but now that he is in fact General of the Artillery, he prefers taking the field with four. He is a gallant fellow, and offered, on my proposal last night, to remain with me and command his company, in case General Grouchy had agreed to the proposal I made to Cherin. It is altogether an enterprise truly *unique*; we have not one guinea; we have not a tent; we have not a horse to draw our four pieces of artillery; the General-in-Chief marches on foot; we leave all our baggage behind us; we have nothing but the arms in our hands, the clothes on our backs, and a good courage, but that is sufficient. With all these original circumstances, such as I believe never were found united in an expedition of such magnitude as that we are about to attempt, we are all as gay as larks. I never saw the French character better exemplified, than in this morning's business. Well, at last I believe we are about to disembark; God knows how I long for it. But this infernal easterly wind continues without remorse, and though we have been under way three or four hours, and made I believe three hundred tacks, we do not seem to my eyes to have gained one hundred yards in a straight line. One hour and a half of good wind would carry us up, and, perhaps, we may be yet two days. My enemy, the wind, seems just now, at eight o'clock, to relent a little, so we may reach Bantry by to-morrow. The enemy has now had four days to recover from his panic, and prepare to receive us; so much the worse, but I do not mind it. We purpose to make a race for Cork, as if the devil

were in our bodies, and when we are fairly there, we will stop for a day or two to take breath, and look about us. From Bantry to Cork is about forty-five miles, which, with all our efforts, will take us three days, and I suppose we may have a brush by the way, but I think we are able to deal with any force that can, at a week's notice, be brought against us.

“ *December 25th.*—These memorandums are a strange mixture. Sometimes I am in preposterously high spirits, and at other times I am as dejected, according to the posture of our affairs. Last night I had the strongest expectations that to-day we should debark, but at two this morning I was awakened by the wind. I rose immediately, and, wrapping myself in my great coat, walked for an hour in the gallery, devoured by the most gloomy reflections. The wind continues right ahead, so that it is absolutely impossible to work up to the landing place, and God knows when it will change. The same wind is exactly favourable to bring the English upon us, and these cruel delays give the enemy time to assemble his entire force in this neighbourhood, and perhaps (it is, unfortunately, more than perhaps), by his superiority in numbers, in cavalry, in artillery, in money, in provisions, in short in everything we want, to crush us, supposing we are even able to effectuate a landing at last, at the same time that the fleet will be caught as in a trap. Had we been able to land the first day and march directly to Cork, we should have infallibly carried it by a *coup de main*; and then we should have a footing in the country, but as it is—if we are taken, my fate will not be a mild one; the best I can expect is to be shot as an *émigré rentré*, unless I have the good fortune to be killed in the action; for most assuredly if the enemy will have us, he must fight for us. Perhaps I may be reserved for a trial, for the sake of striking terror into others, in which case I shall be hanged as a traitor, and emboweled, &c. As to the emboweling, ‘*je m’en fiche*’ if ever they hang me, they are welcome to embowel me if they please. These are pleasant prospects! Nothing on earth could sustain me now, but the consciousness that I am engaged in a just and righteous cause. For my family, I have, by a desperate effort, surmounted my natural feelings so far, that I do not think of them at this moment. This day, at twelve, the wind blows a gale, still from the east; and our situation is now as critical as possible, for it is morally certain that this day or to-morrow on the morning, the English fleet will be in the harbour’s mouth, and then adieu to everything. In this desperate state of affairs, I proposed to Cherin to sally out with all our forces, to mount to the Shannon, and, disembarking the troops, make a forced march to Limerick,

which is probably unguarded, the garrison being, I am pretty certain, on its march to oppose us here ; to pass the river at Limerick, and, by forced marches, push to the North. I detailed all this on a paper which I will keep, and showed it to Captain Bedout, and all the Generals on board, Cherin, Simon, and Chasseloup. They all agreed as to the advantages of the plan, but after settling it, we find it impossible to communicate with the General and Admiral, who are in the *Immortalité*, nearly two leagues ahead, and the wind is now so high and foul, and the sea so rough, that no boat can live, so all communication is impracticable, and to-morrow morning it will, most probably, be too late ; and on this circumstance, perhaps, the fate of the expedition and the liberty of Ireland depends. I cannot conceive for what reason the two Commanders-in-Chief are shut up together in a frigate. Surely they should be on board the flag-ship. But that is not the first misfortune resulting from this arrangement. Had General Hoche remained, as he ought, on board the *Indomptable*, with his *Etat Major*, he would not have been separated and taken by the English, as he most probably is ; nor should we be in the difficulties we now find ourselves in, and which most probably to-morrow will render insurmountable. Well, it does not signify complaining. Our first capital error was in setting sail too late from the Bay of Camaret, by which means we were obliged to pass the Raz in the night, which caused the loss of the *Seduisant*, the separation of the fleet, the capture of the General, and above all, the loss of time resulting from all this, and which is never to be recovered. Our second error was in losing an entire day in cruising off the Bay, when we might have entered and effected a landing with thirty-five sail, which would have secured everything, and now our third error is having our Commander-in-Chief separated from the *Etat Major*, which renders all communication utterly impossible. My prospects at this hour are as gloomy as possible. I see nothing before me, unless a miracle be wrought in our favour, but the ruin of the expedition, the slavery of my country, and my own destruction. Well, if I am to fall, at least I will sell my life as dear as individual resistance can make it. So now I have made up my mind. I have a merry Christmas of it to-day.

*December 26th.*—Last night, at half after six o'clock, in a heavy gale of wind still from the east, we were surprised by the Admiral's frigate running under our quarter, and hailing the *Indomptable*, with orders to cut our cable and put to sea instantly ; the frigate then pursued her course, leaving us all in the utmost astonishment. Our first idea was that it might be an English



frigate, lurking in the bottom of the Bay, which took advantage of the storm and darkness of the night to make her escape, and wished to separate our squadron by this stratagem ; for it seems utterly incredible, that an Admiral should cut and run in this manner, without any previous signal of any kind to warn the fleet, and that the first notice we should have of his intention, should be his hailing us in this extraordinary manner, with such unexpected and peremptory orders. After a short consultation with his officers (considering the storm, the darkness of the night, that we have two anchors out, and only one spare one in the hold), Captain Bedout resolved to wait, at all events, till to-morrow morning, in order to ascertain whether it was really the Admiral who hailed us. The morning is now come, the gale continues, and the fog is so thick that we cannot see a ship's length ahead ; so here we lie in the utmost uncertainty and anxiety. In all probability we are now left without Admiral or General ; if so, Cherin will command the troops, and Bedout the fleet, but, at all events, there is an end of the expedition. Certainly we have been persecuted by a strange fatality, from the very night of our departure to this hour. We have lost two Commanders-in-Chief ; of four Admirals not one remains ; we have lost one ship of the line, that we know of, and probably many others of which we know nothing ; we have been now six days in Bantry Bay, within five hundred yards of the shore, without being able to effectuate a landing ; we have been dispersed four times in four days, and, at this moment, of forty-three sail, of which the expedition consisted, we can muster of all sizes but fourteen. There only wants our falling in with the English to complete our destruction ; and, to judge of the future by the past, there is every probability that that will not be wanting. All our hopes are now reduced to get back in safety to Brest, and I believe we will set sail for that port the instant the weather will permit. I confess, myself, I now look upon the expedition as impracticable. The enemy has had seven days to prepare for us, and three, or perhaps four days more before we could arrive at Cork ; and we are now too much reduced, in all respects, to make the attempt with any prospect of success—so, all is over ! It is hard, after having forced my way thus far, to be obliged to turn back ; but it is my fate, and I must submit. Notwithstanding all our blunders, it is the dreadful stormy weather and easterly winds, which have been blowing furiously, and without intermission, since we made Bantry Bay, that have ruined us. Well, England has not had such an escape since the Spanish Armada, and that expedition, like ours, was defeated by the weather ; the elements fight against us, and

courage is here of no avail. Well, let me think no more about it ; it is lost, and let it go !

“ *December 27th.*—Yesterday several vessels, including the *Indomptable*, dragged their anchors several times, and it was with great difficulty they rode out the gale. At two o'clock, the *Revolution*, a 74, made signal that she could hold no longer, and, in consequence of the Commodore's permission, who now commands our little squadron, cut her only cable and put to sea. In the night, the *Patriote* and *Pluton*, of 74 each, were forced to go to sea, with the *Nicomede* flute, so that this morning we are reduced to seven sail of the line and one frigate. Any attempt here is now desperate, but I still think, if we were debarked at the mouth of the Shannon, we might yet recover all. At ten o'clock, the Commodore made signal to get under weigh, which was delayed by one of the ships, which required an hour to get ready. This hour we availed ourselves of to hold a council of war, at which were present, Generals Cherin, Harty, and Humbert, who came from their ships for that purpose ; Adjutant-Generals Simon, Chasseloup, and myself ; Lieutenant-Colonel Waudré, commanding the artillery, and Favory, Captain of Engineers, together with Commodore Bedout, who was invited to assist ; General Harty, as senior officer, being President. It was agreed that, our force being now reduced to 4,168 men, our artillery to two four pounders, our ammunition to 1,500,000 cartridges and 500 rounds for the artillery, with 500 pounds of powder—this part of the country being utterly wild and savage, furnishing neither provisions nor horses, and especially as the enemy, having seven days notice, together with three more which it would require to reach Cork, supposing we even met with no obstacle, had time more than sufficient to assemble his forces in numbers sufficient to crush our little army ; considering, moreover, that this province is the only one of the four which has testified no disposition to revolt ; that it is the most remote from the party which is ready for insurrection ; and, finally, Captain Bedout having communicated his instructions, which are, to mount as high as the Shannon, and cruise there five days ; it was unanimously agreed to quit Bantry Bay directly, and proceed for the mouth of the Shannon, in hopes to rejoin some of our scattered companions ; and when we are there we will determine, according to the means in our hands, what part we shall take. I am the more content with this determination, as it is substantially the same with the paper which I read to General Cherin and the rest, the day before yesterday. The wind, at last, has come round to the southward, and the signal is now flying to get under weigh. At half after four,

there being every appearance of a stormy night, three vessels cut their cables and put to sea. The Indomptable, having with great difficulty weighed one anchor, we were forced, at length, to cut the cable of the other, and make the best of our way out of the Bay, being followed by the whole of our little squadron, now reduced to ten sail, of which seven are of the line, one frigate, and two corvettes or luggers.

“*December 28th.*—Last night it blew a perfect hurricane. At one this morning, a dreadful sea took the ship in the quarter, stove in the quarter gallery, and one of the dead-lights in the great cabin, which was instantly filled with water to the depth of three feet. Immediately after this blow, the wind abated, and, at daylight, having run nine knots an hour, under one jib only, during the hurricane, we found ourselves at the rendezvous, having parted company with three ships of the line and the frigate, which makes our *sixt'i* separation. The frigate Coquille joined us in the course of the day, which we spent standing off and on the shore, without being joined by any of our missing companions.

“*December 29th.*—At four this morning, the Commodore made the signal to steer for France: so, there is an end of our expedition for the present; perhaps, for ever. I spent all yesterday in my hammock, partly through sea-sickness, and much more through vexation. At ten, we made prize of an unfortunate brig, bound from Lisbon to Cork, laden with salt, which we sunk.

“*December 30th and 31st.*—On our way to Brest. It will be well supposed I am in no great humour to make memorandums. This is the last day of the year 1796, which has been a very remarkable one in my history.

“*January 1st, 1797.*—At eight this morning made the island of Ushant, and at twelve opened the *Goulet*. We arrive seven sail: the Indomptable, of 80; the Watigny, Cassard, and Eole, 74; the Coquille, 36; the Atalante, 20, and the Vautour lugger, of 14. We left Brest forty-three sail, of which seventeen were of the line. I am utterly astonished that we did not see a single English ship-of-war, going nor coming back. They must have taken their measures very ill, not to intercept us, but, perhaps, they have picked up some of our missing ships. Well, this evening will explain all, and we shall see now what is become of our four Admirals, and of our two Generals-in-Chief.”

So ended the great “Bantry Bay Expedition.” Fifteen days after the arrival of Tone at Brest, the missing frigate *La Fraternité*, with General Hoche and the Admiral on board, made her way after many dangers into the port of La Rochelle.



In addition to the hostility of the elements, this attempt at an invasion of Ireland had certain other disadvantages to contend with: it was directed to that portion of the island which was the least ripe for insurrection, and in which the United Irish Society was least extended and organized. It arrived at a part of the coast surrounded by desolate mountains, where there were but small resources for a commissariat, where no good horses could be found for the artillery and waggons, and where the wretched population had scarcely ever heard either of a French Republic or of an United Irish Society, or of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity. This was against the wishes and counsels of Wolf Tone, who was in favour of the landing somewhere near Dublin or Belfast. So ignorant and so ill-prepared were the natives of Beer and Bantry, that they regarded the liberating force as a hostile invasion; and Plowden informs us that when a boat was sent ashore from the squadron to reconnoitre the country, "it was immediately captured, and multitudes appeared on the beach in readiness to oppose a landing." In addition to this, the English Government had always full and accurate information as to the whole plan of invasion, and had thus been enabled to deceive the leaders of the United Irishmen by false information. The whole affair is thus accurately explained in the Report of the Secret Committee of the House of Lords in 1798—(*viii Lord's Journal*, p. 142):—

"It appears by the Report of the Secret Committee of this House, made in the last Session of Parliament, that a messenger had been despatched by the Society of United Irishmen to the Executive Directory of the French Republic, upon a treasonable mission, between the month of June, 1795, and the month of January, 1796, at which time the messenger so sent and returned to Ireland; and your committee have strong reason to believe, that Edward John Lewins, who now is, and has been, for a considerable time, the accredited resident ambassador of the Irish Rebellious Union to the French Republic, was the person thus despatched in the summer of 1795. It appears to your committee, that the proposition so made by the French Directory, of assistance to the rebels of this kingdom, was taken into consideration by the Executive Directory of the Irish Union immediately after it was communicated to them, that they did agree to accept the proffered assistance, and that their determination was made known to the Directory of the French Republic by a special messenger; and your committee have strong reason to believe, that the invasion of this kingdom which was afterwards attempted, was fully arranged at an interview which took

place in Switzerland, in the summer of 1796, near the French frontier, between Lord Edward Fitzgerald, the aforesaid Mr. Arthur O'Connor, and General Hoche. It appears to your committee, that in the month of October or November, 1796, the hostile armanent which soon after appeared in Bantry Bay, was announced to the Irish Directory by a special messenger despatched from France, who was also instructed to inquire into the state of preparation in which this country stood, which armament was then stated to the Irish Directory to consist of 15,000 troops, together with a considerable quantity of arms and ammunition, intended for the use of the Irish Republican Union. In a few days after the departure of the messenger, who had been thus sent to announce the speedy arrival of this armament on the coasts of this kingdom, it appears to your committee, *that a letter from France was received by the Irish Directory, which was considered by them as authentic*, stating that the projected descent was postponed for some months, and to this circumstance it has been fairly acknowledged to your committee, by one of the Irish Directory, that this country was indebted for the good conduct of the people in the Province of Munster, when the enemy appeared in Bantry Bay. He has confessed, *that these contradictory communications threw the Irish Directory off their guard*, in consequence of which they omitted to prepare the people for the reception of the enemy. He has confessed, that the people were loyal because they were left to themselves."

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## CHAPTER XXX.

1797.

DURING the whole of the year that saw Tone negotiating in France for the great Bantry Bay expedition, the Government in Ireland, well seconded by magistrates, sheriffs, military officers and Orangemen, was steadily proceeding, with a ferocious deliberation, in driving the people to utter despair. Many districts of Armagh County were already covered with the blackened ruins of poor cabins, lately the homes of innocent people, thousands of whom, with their old people, their women and little children, were wandering homeless and starving, or were already dead of hunger and cold, when the Grand Jury of Armagh, at the Lent Assizes, bethinking them that it would be well to soften or do away with the impressions produced by these horrible events, and the comments of which they were the subject, agreed to an address and

résolutions expressive of their full determination to put the coercion laws in force, and to enforce strict justice. Mr. Plowden says, artlessly :—" Their annunciation of impartial justice, and a resolution to punish offenders of every denomination, was rather unseasonable, when there remained no longer any of one denomination to commit outrages upon, or to retaliate injuries." He might have added that, many of the gentlemen composing that Grand Jury had themselves encouraged and participated in the extermination of the Catholics. But they knew very well that no coercion law of that Parliament was at all intended to be enforced against Orangemen ; that the " unlawful oaths forbidden under pain of death," did not mean to include the *purple oath* of Orangemen to extirpate Catholics, but only the United Irish oath, to encourage brotherly union, and seek " an impartial representation for all the people of Ireland." In fact, no Orangemen was ever prosecuted ; nor was any punishment ever inflicted on the exterminators of Armagh Catholics.

This statement might seem almost incredible in any civilized nation ; but the proofs of the gross partiality of the Legislature and Government, or rather of their strict alliance with the Orange faction, are too numerous and clear to be doubted. For example, a report of a secret committee of the Commons, shortly after this time, informs us, " that in the summer of 1796, the outrages committed by a banditti, calling themselves Defenders, in the Counties of Roscommon, Leitrim, Longford, Meath, Westmeath, and Kildare, together with a *religious feud* prevailing in the County of Armagh, induced the Legislature to pass a temporary act of Parliament, generally called the Insurrection Act, by which the Lord Lieutenant and Council were enabled, upon the requisition of seven magistrates of any county, assembled at a sessions of the peace, to proclaim the whole or any part thereof, to be in a state of disturbance ; within which limits this law, giving increased power to the magistracy, was to have operation." What is here mildly called a " religious feud," was the extirpation of one sect of people by another, on account of their religion alone.

The British Government in Ireland has never been able to dispense with an organ at the Press, in the pay of the Castle. The chief Government paper of that day was *Faulkner's Journal*, which was then savage in its denunciations of Catholics, Defenders, and United Irishmen, but had only praise for the Armagh Orangemen.

The *Dublin Evening Post* of the 24th of September, 1796, contained the following observations :—" The most severe stroke made against the character and conduct of the Viceroy, as a moral



man and first magistrate of a free people, who 'ought not to hold the sword *in vain*,' nor to exercise it *partially*, has been in *Faulkner's Journal* of this day. That hireling print is undeniably in the pay of his lordship's administration; and what administration permits, it is supposed to prompt or patronize. In that print, the blind fury of the banditti, which usurps and disgraces the name of *Orange* in the North, is applauded, and all their bloody excesses justified. Murder in all its horrid forms, assassinations in cold blood, the mutilation of members without respect to age or sex, the firing of whole hamlets, so that when the inhabitants have been looked after, nothing but their ashes were to be found; the atrocious excursions of furious hordes, armed with sword, fire, and faggot, to exterminate a people, for presuming to obey the Divine command, written by the finger of God Himself, 'Honour thy father and thy mother,' and walking in the religion which seemed good in their eyes. These are the flagitious enormities which attract the mercenary applause of *Faulkner's Journal*, the literary prop of the Camden administration."

And in this very same month of September, while *Faulkner's Journal* was doing this kind of service for Castle pay, the *Northern Star* of Belfast, an able and moderate organ of the United Irishmen, had its office attacked and ransacked by soldiers; Samuel Neilson, its editor, and several others, were arrested, carried to Dublin, thrown into prison, and kept there for more than a year without having been brought to any trial.

On the 13th of October, 1796, Parliament met. In his speech from the throne, his Excellency now for the first time took tender and oblique notice of the disturbances of Armagh. "I have, however, to lament, that in one part of the country good order has not yet been entirely restored; and that in other districts a treasonable system of secret confederation, by the administering of illegal oaths still continues, although no means within the reach of Government have been left untried to counteract it."

Mr. Grattan, in the debate upon the address, objected to this speech as betraying gross partiality, and moved the following amendment:—

"To represent to his Majesty, that the most effectual method for strengthening the country and promoting unanimity, was to take such measures, and to enact such laws, as to insure to all his Majesty's subjects the blessings and privileges of the constitution, without any distinction of religion." The amendment was seconded by Mr. W. B. Ponsonby.

The debate was carried on till two o'clock in the morning with extreme heat and virulence. Mr Grattan's amendment was

opposed, as unseasonable and *violent*, by several of those who had been in the habit of voting with him on all occasions ; insomuch that the minority on the division consisted only of 12 against 149. In the course of this debate Lord Castlereagh replied with great warmth to Mr. Grattan : and Mr. Pelham spoke more at length than he usually did. He particularly adverted to the two topics, which had formed the principal ground of the debate ; namely, the question of Catholic Emancipation, and the disturbances of Armagh. “As to the first, he thought it very improperly brought forward at that juncture. It was then no time to make distinctions between Catholics and Protestants; *no such distinction was made by Government.*”

As for the disturbances in Armagh, of course Mr. Secretary Pelham defended the Government and the magistrates ; and said, if the Insurrection Act had not been applied there, as in some other counties, it was because the magistrates had not thought the nature of the troubles “would justify the application of that very severe law.”

It was in this Session that the *Habeas Corpus* Act was suspended. This suspension, together with the Insurrection and Indemnity Acts, completed the arrangements for putting out of the pale of the law about nine-tenths of the population.

When Mr. Secretary Pelham moved, on the 26th of October, 1796, that the House should adjourn for about a fortnight ; Mr. Curran strongly opposed it ; particularly upon the grounds of the necessity of putting an immediate check upon the still continuing outrageous disturbances of Armagh, which surpassed in horror everything he had ever heard or read. He had on the first day of the Session stated the number of *families* that had become the victims of that infernal barbarity at 700 ; it was with great pain he mentioned, that upon more minute inquiry, he found as many more must be added to the miserable catalogue ; he was in possession of evidence, ready to be examined at their bar, and whom he hoped they would hear, that would satisfy them upon oath, that not less than 1,400 families had been thus barbarously expelled from their houses, and then were wandering about the neighbouring counties, save such of them as might have been murdered, or burned in their cottages, or perished in the fields, or highways, by fatigue and famine, and despair ; and that horrid scene had been transacted, and was still continuing in the open day, in the heart of the kingdom, without any effectual interference whatsoever.

This public testimony of Mr. Curran, which he would not have dared to give in open Parliament if it could have been contra-

dicted, may finish the picture of the North of Ireland in this year. There were now several successive adjournments until the 6th of January, 1797. In the meantime, the French fleet had appeared in Bantry Bay, and disappeared again, giving rise to numberless rumours throughout the island, and rousing sentiments of rage and horror in one party, of hope and joy in another, but on the whole, intensifying the bitterness and vindictive passion of the "Ascendancy" against Catholics and United Irishmen, who had so nearly succeeded in bringing upon them such terrible visitors. On the re-assembling of Parliament, many Members brought forward resolutions of inquiry or complaint as to the remiss conduct of the Government on occasion of the threatened invasion, of which it was well-known Government had possessed timely intelligence. The reformers and emancipators of the House showed what the Castle thought a very suspicious anxiety for the defence of the country, when they proposed very large additions to the armed yeomanry of the country. The administration did not forget that in 1782 it had been this same alleged lack of sufficient defence against foreign enemies which gave occasion to the volunteering, and that when the Volunteers were enrolled and armed, they very naturally acted as if they considered England the only foreign enemy they had. The Government, therefore, would not suffer any measure of general armament to pass, but assented to a proposal of Sir John Blaquiere, for raising an additional force of 10,000 men; this, however, to be in the nature of militia, officered by Government, and the Government was to have entire control of its organization and its *personnel*.

On a subsequent night, Sir Lawrence Parsons made another attempt, by a resolution that it was necessary to have a permanent force for protection of the country. The motion was opposed with bitter violence by Mr. Secretary Pelham. Mr. Grattan followed; and the real nature of the question at issue will be manifest in this extract from his speech:—"The Secretary asked, who could be more interested for the safety of Ireland than the British Minister? He would answer, Ireland herself. To refer to the British Minister the safety of that country was the most sottish folly; it was false and unparliamentary to say, that the House had no right to recommend a measure, such as the honourable baronet proposed. Had it been a proposition to increase the regular standing army, it might, perhaps, have been a little irregular; but when an increase of 10,000 to the standing army was proposed by a right honourable baronet the other night, it was not considered as an affront. Now another honourable



baronet comes forward to give an army five fold as many, and five fold as cheap, and administration are affronted. Why? Because that army was of the people. If the doctrine the right honourable Member advanced were true, and that the duty of Parliament now were become nothing more than merely to vote taxes, and echo three millions, when the Minister said three millions are wanted, then, indeed, *actum est de parlamento*; a reform of the representation was become then more than ever necessary."

It was easy for the Ministers to perceive what was in the minds of Mr. Grattan and his friends: to have another popular army strong enough at once to preserve the public peace and to protect the Constitution of the country; and Ministers were fully resolved that neither of these things should be done; the public peace was to be destroyed by insurrection, in order that the Constitution should be destroyed by Legislative "union." On this motion of Sir Lawrence Parsons there was a division at four o'clock in the morning—25 voted for it, 125 against it.

In December, January, and February of this winter, many districts in the Counties of Ulster were "proclaimed" under the Insurrection Act; and more than the horrors of martial law were now raging there. The anxiety and excitement of the country had re-acted disastrously upon trade and general business interests; and in the midst of this came a sudden order from the Privy Council to the Governor and Company of the Bank of Ireland to suspend specie payments. The manifest object of this measure was still further to aggravate that "alarm of the better classes," which is a needful and unfailing agency of British domination in Ireland; and it had the desired effect. But it also excited some attention in England; and Mr. Whitbread, in the English Commons, and Lord Moira, in the Lords, made ineffectual efforts to procure an inquiry into the conduct of Ministers with regard to Ireland. It is needless to say, these attempts were vehemently resisted by the administration, and were defeated by vast majorities. British Ministers wanted no inquiry; they already knew all; and all was proceeding precisely as they had ordered and intended. A singular feature of this incident is, that the debates on the state of Ireland in the English Parliament roused the patriotic indignation of the notorious Doctor Duigenan, then a Member of the Irish Parliament for Armagh, a doctor of the civil law and a renegade Papist, therefore more desperately vindictive against Papists, and more abusive of their tenets than any Orangeman in the land. The Doctor was seized with a sudden fit of Irish patriotism; and

gave notice in the House, on the 30th of March, that after the recess he would move a resolution condemnatory of such unconstitutional interferences, and refuting the false statements made in the other Parliament respecting Ireland by Lord Moira, Mr. Whitbread, and Mr. Fox. Mr. Grattan desired him to give due notice of that motion; as it was his intention to demonstrate that the statements were both true, and also constitutional. But Mr. Grattan had now, at length, come to perceive that labours in that Parliament were utterly thrown away. Accordingly, he determined to *secede* from the body. In a speech of his upon the state of the North, where General Lake was now dragooning the people with unexampled ferocity, he protested solemnly, but most hopelessly, that the true remedy for all the troubles lay in a just Government and reform of Parliament; and speaking of the United Irish Society: "Notwithstanding your Gunpowder Act, it has armed and increased its military stores under that act; notwithstanding your Insurrection Act, another bill to disarm, it has greatly added to its magazines; and notwithstanding the suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* Bill and General Lake's proclamation, it has multiplied its proselytes. I should have asked, had I been on the Secret Committee, whether the number of United Irishmen had not increased very much since General Lake's proclamation, and by General Lake's proclamation. It appears, I say, from that report, that just as your system of coercion advanced, the United Irishmen advanced; that the measures you took to coerce, strengthened; to disperse, collected; to disarm, armed; to render them weak and odious, made them popular and powerful: whereas, on the other hand you have loaded Parliament and Government with the odium of an oppressive system, and with the further odium of rejecting these two popular topics, which you allow are the most likely to gain the heart of the nation, and be the beloved objects of the people."

Mr. Grattan closed his speech and the debate with these words: "We have offered you our measure; you will reject it; we deprecate yours; you will persevere; having no hopes left to persuade or dissuade, and having discharged our duty, *we shall trouble you no more, and after this day, shall not attend the House of Commons.*"—17 Par. Deb., p. 570.

Accordingly, at the next general election, Mr. Grattan and Lord Henry Fitzgerald declined to be returned for Dublin. Mr. Curran, Arthur O'Connor, and Lord Edward Fitzgerald followed the example. There has been much discussion upon this "secession." It has been urged on the one hand, that Grattan and Curran and Lord Henry Fitzgerald, who still appealed to the Constitution,

and acknowledged the existence and authority of a British Government in Ireland, were wrong to abandon the legal and constitutional field. On the other, it has been argued, that having abandoned that, the only manly and rational course left them was to join the United Irishmen as O'Connor and Lord Edward had already done. It is hard to blame those excellent men and true Irishmen, Grattan and Curran. If they had joined the United Irish Society, they would have probably found themselves immediately in Newgate, as O'Connor and Lord Edward Fitzgerald soon after did, besides, they were not republicans, and abhorred "French principles" as earnestly as Lord Clare himself.

When Wolfe Tone, in his French exile, heard of the secession, his observation in his journal is:—"I see those illustrious patriots are at last forced to bolt out of the House of Commons, and come amongst the people, as John Keogh advised Grattan to do long since." They did bolt from the House of Commons, but did not come amongst the people.

In short, he saw now that the unhappy country was delivered over to its bloody agony, and that he could do no more than look on in silence. General Lake had entered upon his mission with zeal; many seizures of concealed arms and ammunition were made. In the execution of these orders, some barbarous outrages were committed by the military, which tended to inflame and exasperate the minds of the people, which were already too highly inflamed. Not only some women and children had been murdered, but the houses of some respectable persons were pillaged and demolished, upon the bare suspicion of their being United Irishmen.

The newspaper called the *Morning Star*, in Belfast, after it had been sacked a few months earlier, had been refitted, and was again carried on with spirit, exposing the evil designs of the Ministers, and publishing boldly, essays and letters in favour of civil liberty. It was, of course, necessary now that the paper should be suppressed altogether. Nelson, its first editor, and the two Simms, its proprietors, were all now in Newgate prison, though not accused of any offence whatever. The newspaper was required by military authority to insert an article reflecting on the loyalty of the people of Belfast; the article did not appear as ordered; the next morning, a detachment of soldiers marched out of the barracks, attacked the printing office, and utterly demolished every part of it, breaking the presses, scattering the types, and seizing the books. Thus disappeared the *Morning Star*, and it never rose again. There was after that nobody daring enough to even record, or allude to, far less to denounce,



the hideous atrocities which the policy of the Castle required to be perpetrated.

It was now the avowed opinion of Government, that the treason was in the course of the winter of 1796, and the spring of 1797, too deeply rooted to yield to the remedy of the law, even where it was put in force by the magistrates with activity. Such an assumption was prominently calculated to open the door to the strongest measures, and the general command given to the civil and military officers, by proclamation, to use the exertions of their utmost force, and to oppose with their full power all such as should resist them in the execution of their duty, which was to search for and seize concealed arms, admitted of a latitude of power, not very likely to be temperately regulated by raw troops let in upon a country denounced rebellious, and devoted to military rigour, as a necessary substitute for the inefficacy of the municipal law. A regiment of Welsh cavalry, called the *Ancient Britons*, commanded by Sir Watkin William Wynne, were at all times prominently conspicuous for the rigorous execution of any orders for devastation, destruction, or extermination. They were marked for it by the rebels, and in the course of the rebellion they were cut to pieces almost to a man.

That proclamation, above mentioned, which was published on the 17th of May, was sent to Lord Carhampton, with a letter for Mr. Pelham, on the 18th of May, in consequence of which his lordship immediately published the following order:—"In obedience to the order of the Lord Lieutenant in Council, it is the Commander-in-Chief's commands, that the military do act, without waiting for directions from the civil magistrates, in dispersing any tumultuous or unlawful assemblies of persons threatening the peace of the realm, and the safety of the lives and properties of his Majesty's loyal subjects wheresoever collected."

This proclamation, together with the laws then in existence, and the known wishes of the authorities, left everything at the discretion of the soldiery; *they* were to determine what was an unlawful assembly; and we shall find that they often treated as such, families asleep in their own beds at night, provided there were any pretext for *suspecting* the existence of weapons in the house, or any information of an United Irish oath having been administered there.

Of the outrages done in the course of this year, 1797, it is now impossible to procure anything like a complete account. Yet a few examples well authenticated must be given, to show how martial law worked in those days. Doctor Madden, the indefatigable collector of documents relating to the period, has re-published

the pamphlet before cited, called, "View of the Present State of Ireland." It was published the same year in London, because no printer in Ireland could have dared to print it. The statements of this pamphlet have never been contradicted; and old James Hope, one of the last survivors of the United Irishmen, and a person of intelligence and integrity, thus indorsed it to Dr. Madden:—"This pamphlet contains more truth than all the volumes I have seen written on the events of 1797 and 1798." We select a few extracts:—

"In the month of May last, a party of the Essex Fencibles, accompanied by the Enniskillen Yeomen Infantry, commanded by their First Lieutenant, marched to the house of a Mr. Potter, a very respectable farmer, who lived within five miles of Enniskillen, in the County of Fermanagh. On their arrival, they demanded Mr. Potter, saying they were ordered to arrest him, as he was charged with being an United Irishman. His wife, with much firmness, replied, 'that to be an United Irishman was an honour, not a disgrace; that her husband had gone from home the preceding day on business, and had not yet returned.' They assured her that if he did not surrender himself in *three hours* they would burn his house. Mrs. Potter answered, 'that she did not know exactly where he then was, but, if she did know, she believed it would be impossible to have him home in so *short a time*.' In less than three hours they set fire to the house, which was a very neat one, only about five years built; the servants brought out some beds and other valuable articles, in the hope of preserving them, but the military dashed all back into the flames. The house and property, to the amount of six or seven hundred pounds, were consumed, and Mrs. Potter, with seven children, one of them not a month old, were turned out, at the hour of midnight, into the fields.

"In June, 1797, a party of the Ancient Britons (a Fencible regiment, commanded by Sir Watkin William Wynne), were ordered to examine the house of Mr. Rice, an inn-keeper in the town of Coolavil, County of Armagh, for arms; but on making very diligent search, none could be found. There were some country people drinking in the house, and discoursing in their *native language*; the soldiers damned their *eternal Irish souls*, said they were speaking *treason*, and instantly fell on them with their swords, and maimed several desperately. Miss Rice was so badly wounded that her life was despaired of, and her father escaped with much difficulty, after having received many cuts from the sabres of these assassins.

"In June, some persons had been refreshing themselves at an

inn in Newtownards, County of Down, kept by a Mr. M'Cormick, and it was alleged that they were overheard uttering words termed seditious. M'Cormick was afterwards called on to give information who they were, he denied having any knowledge of them, observing that many people might come into his house whom he did not know, and for whom he could not be accountable. He was taken into custody, and next day his house and extensive property were reduced to ashes. The house of Dr. Jackson was torn down on *suspicion* of his being an *United Irishman*; and many other houses in that town and barony were destroyed, or otherwise demolished, by English Fencibles, on similar pretexts.

"On the 22nd of June, Mr. Joseph Clotney, of Ballinahinch, was committed to the Military Barracks, Belfast, and his house, furniture, and books, worth £3,000, destroyed; also the valuable house of Mr. Armstrong, of that place, was totally demolished.

"A party of Fencibles, then quartered in Enniskillen, were ordered, under the command of a captain and adjutant, accompanied by the First Fermanagh Yeomanry, into an adjoining county to search for arms. About two o'clock in the morning they arrived at the house of one Durnian, a farmer, which, without any previous intimation whatever, they broke open, and, on entering it, one of the Fencibles fired his musket through the roof of the house; an officer instantly discharged his pistol into a bed where two young men were lying, and wounded them both. One of them, *the only child* of Durnian, rose with great difficulty, and on making this effort, faint with the loss of blood, a Fencible stabbed him through the bowels. His distracted mother ran to support him, but in a few moments she sank upon the floor, covered with the blood which issued from the side of her unfortunate son; by this time the other young man had got on his knees to implore mercy, declaring most solemnly that they had not been guilty of any crime, when another Fencible *deliberately knelt down*, levelled his musket at him, and was just going to fire, when a sergeant of Yeomanry rushed in, seized, and prevented his committing the horrid deed. There were persons *who smiled* at the humanity of the sergeant.

"Information had been lodged that a house near Newry, contained concealed arms. A party of the Ancient Britons repaired to the house, but not finding the object of their search, they set it on fire. The peasantry of the neighbourhood came running from all sides to extinguish the flames, believing the fire to have been accidental—it was the first military one in that part of the country. As they came up they were attacked in all directions, and cut down by the Fencibles; thirty were killed, among whom



were a woman and two children. An old man (above seventy years), seeing the dreadful slaughter of his neighbours and friends, fled for safety to some adjacent rocks, he was pursued, and, though on his knees imploring mercy, a brutal Welshman cut off his head at a blow.

"I have stated incontrovertible truths. Months would be insufficient to enumerate all the acts of wanton cruelty which were inflicted on the inhabitants of Ireland from the 1st day of April to the 24th day of July, 1797."

The same authority narrates this fact also, but without date: "The house of Mr. Bernard Crosson, of the parish of Mullanabrack, was attacked by Orangemen, in consequence of being a *reputed* Catholic. His son prevented them from entering by the front door, upon which they broke in at the back part of the house, and, firing on the inhabitants, killed Mr. Crosson, his son, and daughter. Mr. Hugh M'Fay, of the parish of Seagoe, had his house likewise attacked on the same pretence, himself wounded, his furniture destroyed, and his wife barbarously used."

The same writer mentions that, "information having been lodged against a few individuals living in the village of Kilrea, in the County of Derry, for being United Irishmen, a party of the military were ordered to apprehend them; the men avoided the capture, and about three o'clock in the morning, a *reverend* magistrate, accompanied by a clergyman and a body of soldiers, came to the village, and not finding the men, who had avoided capture, they burned all their houses, except four, which could not be burned without endangering the whole village. These they *gutted*, and consumed their contents."

It must be remembered that these scenes, which are but a few samples, all took place in the year 1797, and before there was any insurrection in Ireland; and all in two or three counties of one province. But if there was no insurrection, it was fully resolved at the Castle to provoke one. A remarkable saying used a short time before by a remarkable man, and a very fit partizan of the Irish Government, leaves but little doubt upon the real aims and wishes of the "Ascendency." The man was John Claudius Beresford, of the noble house of Tyrone and Waterford, and one of the most ferocious tyrants in the world—we shall hear of him again at the "Riding School." On the 30th of March, in this year, in his place in Parliament, he thus *corrects*, or rather confirms, the saying attributed to him:—

"Mr. J. C. Beresford begged to correct a misstatement which had gone abroad, of what he had said in a former debate, on the Insurrection Bill. It had been stated in a country paper, and

from thence copied into those of Dublin, that he had expressed a wish 'that the whole of the North of Ireland were in open rebellion, that the Government might cut them off.' This had been very assiduously circulated, to the detriment of his character ; and was, he could confidently say, a falsehood. What he had said was, 'that there *were* certain parts of the North of Ireland in a state of concealed rebellion ; and that he wished those places were *rather* in a state of open rebellion, that the Government might see the rebellion, and crush it.'"

It was observed that after the late extensive spread of the United Irish Society in the North, "Defenderism" had in a great measure ceased there. Many thousands of those who had been Defenders joined their Presbyterian neighbours in the "Union." This, in fact, was the great object of the Union, and the warmest hope of its promoters. The United Irish Societies of Ulster alone, according to a return seized by Government in Belfast, counted, at least on paper, one hundred thousand men in the month of April. They became more confident in their strength ; and having resolved to defer any general rising until the following year, they would not be goaded into a premature outbreak. During the Summer Assizes, although there were very numerous convictions for the usual class of offences attributed to United Irishmen and Defenders (for it was never thought of to prosecute Orangemen—the only criminals), yet there were also several acquittals, greatly to the satisfaction of the United Irish, and to the dismay of the Government. This certainly arose from the greater difficulty which the sheriffs now had in packing sure juries, not being able to tell now who might, or might not, be United Irishmen. Mr. Curran defended many cases on the Northeast Circuit ; amongst which may be mentioned those which occurred in Armagh. There were in the jail of that town, twenty-eight persons accused of this species of alleged offence ; of whom, however, two only were brought to trial. In the former, a suborned soldier, who was brought forward to prosecute one Dogherty, was, upon Dogherty's acquittal, put into the dock in his place, to abide his trial for perjury. The Grand Jury found bills against him, and he remained in custody to abide his trial.

The only other trial was that of the King against Hanlon and Nogher, charged with contemptuously, maliciously, and feloniously tendering to the prosecutor an unlawful oath or engagement, to become one of an unlawful, wicked, and seditious society called United Irishmen.

One witness only was produced in support of this indictment, a soldier of the Twenty-fourth Light Dragoons, of the name of

Fisher, who swore to the administration of an oath, "to be united in brotherhood to pull down the head clergy and half-pay officers." He, upon his cross-examination, said that the obligation had been shown and read to him, in a small book of four leaves, which he had read and would know again. The Constitution of the United Irishmen was then put into his hands by the defendant's counsel, and he admitted the test contained in it, to be the same that he had taken.

On the part of the prisoners, A. T. Stewart, Esq., of Acton, was examined and cross-examined by the Crown. The sum of his testimony was, that this Society had made a rapid progress through the people of all religions, ranks, and classes; that before its introduction into that country, the most horrible religious persecutions existed, attended with murder and extirpation; that since its introduction these atrocities had subsided, as far as he could learn. He admitted he had heard of murders laid to their charge, but he could hardly believe such charges, as he conceived them incompatible with anything he ever could learn of the principles or consequences of their institution.

The jailor was also examined, who said, that fewer persons had been sent to him upon charges of wrecking or robbing houses, or of murder, than before, and that he understood the religious parties began to agree better together, and to fight less.

There was no other material evidence. Mr. Curran spoke an hour and three quarters in defence of the United Irishmen. That he was delighted to find, after so many of them had been immured in dungeons, without trial, that at length the subject had come fairly before the world—and that instead of being a system of organized treason and murder, it proved to be a great bond of national union, founded upon the most acknowledged principle of law, and every sacred obligation due to our country and Creator.

Mr. Baron George gave his opinion decidedly, that the obligation was, under the Act of Parliament, *illegal*. The jury withdrew, and acquitted the prisoner, and thus ended the Assizes of Armagh.

The "Union" continued to recruit its numbers in the North; but with still greater secrecy, and the country remaining perfectly tranquil, notwithstanding the cruel outrages of magistrates and military, trade somewhat revived, and most people seemed to be returning peacefully to their ordinary pursuits. In short, the United Irish of Ulster were resolved not to rise until they should be at least assured of the co-operation of the other three provinces, if not of aid from France. A report of the "Secret Committee" of the Commons, made this summer, congratulated the country upon this apparent decline in the treasonable spirit.



Such, the Committee stated, had been the beneficial consequences of the "measures adopted in the year 1797"—that is, of the rigours of martial law, searches for arms, burnings of houses, and slaughters of women and children. We have already seen, however, that the greater tranquillity and good order of the North arose precisely from the spread of this very "treason," which the Committee pretend to regard as being itself the only disturbance. This Committee goes on to report, that the leaders of the *treason*, apprehensive lest the enemy might be discouraged from any further plan of invasion, by the loyal disposition manifested throughout Munster and Connaught on their former attempt, determined to direct all their exertions to the propagation of the system in those provinces, which had hitherto been but partially infected. With this view emissaries were sent into the south and west in great numbers, of whose success in forming new societies and administering the oaths of the Union, there were, in the course of some few months, but too evident proofs in the introduction of the same disturbances and enormities into Munster, with which the northern province had been so severely visited.

In May, 1797, although numbers had been sworn both in Munster and Leinster, the strength of the organization, exclusive of Ulster, lay chiefly in the metropolis, and in the neighbouring Counties of Dublin, Kildare, Meath, Westmeath, and the King's County. It was very observable, that the counties in which Defenderism had prevailed, easily became converts to the new doctrines; and in the summer of 1797, the usual concomitants of *this species of treason*, namely, the plundering houses of arms, the fabrication of pikes, and the murder of those who did not join their party, began to appear in the midland counties.

"In order to engage the peasantry in the southern counties, particularly in the Counties of Waterford and Cork, the more eagerly in their cause, the United Irishmen found it expedient in urging their general principles, to dwell with peculiar energy on the *supposed oppressiveness of tithes*, which had been the pretext for the old *White Boy's* insurrections. And it is observable, that in addition to the acts of violence usually resorted to by the party for the furtherance of their purposes, the ancient practice of burning the corn, and houghing the cattle of those *against whom their resentment was directed*, was revived, and very generally practised in those counties.

"With a view to excite the resentment of the Catholics, and to turn that resentment to the purposes of the party, fabricated and false tests were represented as having been taken *to exterminate Catholics*, and were industriously disseminated by the

emissaries of the treason throughout the provinces of Leinster, Munster, and Connaught. Reports were frequently circulated amongst the ignorant of the Catholic persuasion, that large bodies of men were coming to put them to death. This fabrication, however extravagant and absurd, was one among the many wicked means by which the deluded peasantry were engaged the more rapidly and deeply in the treason."\*

So far the Committee; and this document is but one of many examples of Legislative slander at the time, and of histories written by "loyal men" since. The Report classes under the same head of "enormities" the fabrication of pikes, and the murder of those who did not join their party. It is true the United Irishmen did everywhere get pikes forged; but utterly untrue that they did in any instance murder any one for not joining them. As for "burning the corn and houghing the cattle of those against whom their resentment was directed"—it is true that the "supposed oppressiveness of tithes," and of church rates, had for many years been the occasion of such acts of outrage against tithe proctors, &c., but quite untrue that outrages of this kind, or any other kind, increased when the United Irish Societies spread into the midland and southern counties. On the contrary, they diminished. We have already seen the strong testimony to this effect in the North; and it may be laid down as universally true, that the Irish people on the eve of an insurrection, or in any violent political excitement, are always free from crime to a most exemplary extent; which is always considered an alarming symptom by the authorities.

"The good effects of the United Irish system in the commencement," says Miles Byrne, † "were soon felt and seen throughout the Counties of Wexford, Carlow, and Wicklow, which were the parts of the country I knew best. *It gave the first alarm to the Government*; they suspected something extraordinary was going on, finding that disputes, fighting at fairs and other places of public meeting, had completely ceased. The magistrates soon perceived this change, as they were now seldom called on to grant summons or warrants to settle disputes. Drunkenness ceased also; for an United Irishman to be found *drunk* was unknown for many months. . . . Such was the

\* Plowden.

† The excellent, chivalrous Miles Byrne, who died only in 1852, a *Chef-de-Bataillon* in the French service, was one of the first United Irishmen in Wexford County. His *Memoirs*, edited by his widow, and published in New York and in Paris in 1863, form one of the most valuable documents for the history of his time, and the insurrection in Wexford.

sanctity of our cause." Even Mr. Plowden, though an enemy of the United Irishmen, and ready enough to call them *miscreants* for their "treason," is obliged to vindicate them from the charge of encouraging or favouring other kinds of crime. But it is true, that if it be an "enormity" to "fabricate pikes," they were guilty of that atrocity.\*

So much, it is right to say, in vindication of as pure, gallant, and self-sacrificing a political party as ever appeared in any country under the sun.

As for the last cited statement in the Committee's Report, it was most accurately true that large bodies of men were at that moment "coming to put them (the Catholics) to death." Twelve English and Scottish militia regiments, besides an immense force of the regular army, were coming, or already come, for that express purpose; which purpose was also carried into effect upon a very great scale. And it was most natural, therefore, that those Catholics should be urged to *unite* for their own defence with those of their countrymen who were objects of the same conspiracy; namely, the Society of United Irishmen.

When this monstrous report was presented in the House of Commons, there was naturally some debate. Mr. Fletcher said, that if coercive measures were to be pursued, the whole country must be coerced, for the spirit of insurrection had pervaded every part of it.

Mr. M. Beresford ordered the clerk to take down these words, and the gallery was instantly cleared. When strangers were again admitted, the debate on the address still continued, and in the course of it Mr. J. C. Beresford thought himself called on to defend the Secret Committee against an assertion which had fallen from Mr. Fletcher in the course of his speech. The assertion was, in substance, that he feared the people would be led to look on the report of the Committee, as fabricated rather to justify the past measures of Government, than to state facts.

\* The question at one time much agitated—whether the United Irishmen, or any of them, did or did not theoretically hold *tyrannicide*, that is, political assassination, to be lawful, is nothing to the purpose; it is enough to know they never practised it, and their leaders professed their abhorrence of it. Singular to say, the only United Irishmen who ever, by any writing of his, gave even a pretext for such an imputation, was the gentle poet, who sings "The Loves of the Angels," and "The Last Rose of Summer." A letter of his, when a student in Trinity College, signed *Sophister*, contains some rhetoric of that sort; and resolutions written by him and offered in one of the U. I. Clubs in College, were the chief occasion of Lord Clare's celebrated *Visitation* to the University; but Lord Clare himself admitted that the resolution advising *tyrannicide* had been rejected.



One statement, however, in the report was true—that during this summer the United Irish system did strike vigorous roots in all the counties of Leinster, except, perhaps, Kilkenny. It has been affirmed that Wexford, which soon made the most formidable figure in the insurrection, had so few United Irishmen within its bounds up to the end of the year 1797, as not to be counted at all in the official returns of the organized counties in February; and it is probable that as the peasantry of Wexford were comparatively comfortable and thrifty, and lived on good terms with their landlords, there was less disposition to rush into insurrectionary organizations at first. Yet Miles Byrne, who was himself sworn in an United Irishman in the summer of 1797, tells us:—"Before a month had elapsed, almost every one had taken the test." He adds:—"We soon organized parochial and baronial meetings, and named delegates to correspond with the county members. Robert Graham, of Corcannon, a cousin of my mother's, was named to represent the county at the meeting to be held in Dublin at Oliver Bond's." Whatever may have been the case in Wexford, it is certain that Kildare, Carlow, Meath, and Dublin, were in the course of the summer completely organized. Miles Byrne says:—"Nothing could exceed the readiness and good will of the United Irishmen to comply with the instructions they received to procure arms, ammunition, &c., notwithstanding the difficulties and perils they underwent in purchasing those articles. Pikes were easily had at this time, for almost every blacksmith was an United Irishman. The pike-blades were soon had, but it was more difficult to procure poles for them; and the cutting down of young ash trees for that purpose awoke great attention and caused great suspicion of the object in view." It is certain, however, that the County of Wexford neither suffered so much, nor was so ripe for insurrection, as many other counties, until after the 1st of April, 1798, when Lord Castlereagh's "well-timed measures" were taken. In the meantime, Lord Edward Fitzgerald and the other leaders were eagerly and impatiently awaiting news of approaching succours from France; keeping the people as quiet as possible, and letting them prepare their arms and steel their hearts, in full view of the corpses blackening upon many a gibbet, and heads impaled on spikes over many a gaol door-way, for the crime of swearing to promote the union of Irishmen, in order to obtain a full and fair representation of the people,\* and deliverance from their savage oppressors.

\* It is right to bear in mind throughout, that the original test of the United Irish Society, which bound them to unite to procure fair representation of all the Irish people in *Parliament*, was changed in 1795 into an en-

## CHAPTER XXXI.

1797—1798.

THE great French armament, destined for the liberation of Ireland, which had looked in at Bantry Bay, had returned to Brest, without so much loss by the bad weather as might have been expected, and without having met a single British ship-of-war. The frigate *Fraternité*, carrying General Hoche and the Admiral Morand de Galles, arrived safely at La Rochelle a fortnight after. Hoche was appointed to the command of the Army of the Sambre and Meuse; and Theobald Wolfe Tone went with him, attached to his personal staff. A great mutual regard seems to have sprung up between the young General and his gallant *Aide*; and the latter, who had by no means given up the project of a French liberating invasion of Ireland, always cherished the hope of seeing Hoche appointed to the chief command. On the 10th of March, he writes to his wife:—"This very day the Executive Directory has ratified the nomination of General Hoche, and I am, to all intents and purposes, Adjutant-General, destined for the Army of Sambre and Meuse."

In the end of May, after a short stay with his family, who had arrived in France, we find him at Cologne, at the head-quarters of that army. In the meantime, Mr. John Edward Lewins, already mentioned as an agent of the United Irishmen, had arrived in France, empowered to treat for another expedition, and to negotiate a loan. When Lewins arrived in Holland, then called the "Batavian Republic," one of the republics dependent upon France, and at war with England, he found the Government very well disposed to essay this bold enterprise of a descent upon Ireland, and to risk their whole navy and army in the effort. An extract from Tone's journal will now afford the best insight into the state of

gagement to unite for the purpose of obtaining a fair representation of all the people—dropping the words "*in Parliament*." From that time, separation and a republican government became the fixed objects of the principal leaders, but not the avowed ones till a little later, when, at the conclusion of every meeting, the chairman was obliged to inform the members of each society, "they had undertaken no light matter," and he was directed to ask every delegate present what were his views and his understanding of those of his society, and each individual was expected to reply, "a republican government and a separation from England."—*Pieces of Irish History*. Madden.

All this was, of course, as well-known to the Government as to the members; so that it cannot in candour be said, that the U. I. were treated as criminals for the mere fact of *uniting*—it was for uniting to destroy British dominion in Ireland, and erect a republic in its place.

this negotiation. While with General Hoche, at his *Quartier General*, at Friedberg, he writes, under date of June 12th, 1797 :—

“ This evening the General called me into the garden and told me he had some good news for me. He then asked, ‘ Did I know one, Lewins ? ’ I answered I did, perfectly well, and had a high opinion of his talents and patriotism. ‘ Well,’ said he, ‘ he is at Neuwied, waiting to see you ; you must set off to-morrow morning ; when you join him, you must go together to Treves, and wait for further orders.’ The next morning I set off, and, on the 14th, in the evening, reached—

“ *June 14th, Neuwied* ; where I found Lewins waiting for me. I cannot express the unspeakable satisfaction I felt at seeing him. I gave him a full account of all my labours, and of everything that had happened since I have been in France, and he informed me, in return, of everything of consequence relating to Ireland, and especially to my friends now in jeopardy there.

“ *June 17th, Treves* ; where we arrived on the 17th. What is most material is, that he is sent here by the Executive Committee of the United People of Ireland, to solicit, on their part, the assistance in troops, arms, and money, necessary to enable them to take the field, and assert their liberty ; the organization of the people is complete, and nothing is wanting but the point d’appui. His instructions are to apply to France, Holland, and Spain. At Hamburgh, where he passed almost two months, he met a Senor Nava, an officer of rank in the Spanish navy, sent thither by the Prince of Peace, on some mission of consequence ; he opened himself to Nava, who wrote off, in consequence, to his court, and received an answer, general, it is true, but in the highest degree favourable ; a circumstance which augurs well, is, that in forty days from the date of Nava’s letter, he received the answer, which is less time than he ever knew a courier to arrive in, and shows the earnestness of the Spanish Minister. Lewins’ instructions are to demand of Spain £500,000 sterling, and 30,000 stand of arms. At Treves, on the 19th, Dalton, the General’s Aide-de-Camp, came express with orders for us to return to—

“ *June 21st, Coblentz* ; where we arrived on the 21st, and met General Hoche. He told us that, in consequence of the arrival of Lewins, he had sent off Simon, one of his Adjutant-Generals, who was of our late expedition, in order to press the Executive Directory and Minister of the Marine ; that he had also sent copies of all the necessary papers, including especially those lately prepared by Lewins, with his own observations, enforcing them in the strongest manner ; that he had just received the answers of all parties, which were as favourable as we could desire ; but



that the Minister of the Marine was absolutely for making the expedition on a grand scale, for which two months, at the very least, would still be necessary : to which I, knowing Brest of old, and that two months, in the language of the Marine, meant four at least, if not five or six, remarked the necessity of immediate exertions in order to profit of the state of mutiny and absolute disorganization in which the English navy is at this moment, in which Lewins heartily concurred ; and we both observed that *it was not a strong military force* that we wanted at this moment, but arms and ammunition, with troops sufficient to serve as a *noyau de'armee*, and protect the people in their first assembling ; adding, that 5,000 men sent now, when the thing was feasible, would be far better than 25,000 in three months, when, perhaps, we might find ourselves again blocked up in Brest harbour ; and I besought the General to remember that the mutiny aboard the English fleet would most certainly be soon quelled, so that there was not a moment to lose ; that if we were lucky enough to arrive in Ireland before that took place, I looked upon it as morally certain, that by proper means, we might gain over the seamen, who have already spoken of steering the fleet into the Irish harbour, and so settle the business, perhaps, without striking a blow, We both pressed these, and such other arguments as occurred, in the best manner we were able ; to which General Hoche replied, he saw everything precisely in the same light we did, and that he would act accordingly, and press the Directory and Minister of the Marine in the strongest manner. He showed Lewins Simons' letter, which contained the assurance of the Directory, 'that they would make no peace with England wherein the interests of Ireland should not be fully discussed agreeably to the wishes of the people of that country.' This is a very strong declaration, and has most probably been produced by a demand made by Lewins in his memorial, 'that the French Government should make it an indispensable condition of peace, that all the British troops be withdrawn from Ireland, and the people left at full liberty to declare whether they wished to continue the connection with England or not.' General Hoche then told us not to be discouraged by the arrival of a British negotiator, for that the Directory were determined to make no peace but on conditions which would put it out of the power of England longer to arrogate to herself the commerce of the world, and dictate her laws to all the maritime powers. He added that preparations were making also in Holland for an expedition, the particulars of which he would communicate to us in two or three days, and, in the meantime, desired us to attend him to—

“*June 24th.*—Cologne ; for which place we set off, and arrived the 24th.

“*June 25th.*—At nine o'clock at night the General sent us a letter from General Daendels, Commander-in-Chief of the Army of the Batavian Republic, acquainting him that everything was in the greatest forwardness, and would be ready in a very few days ; that the army and the navy were in the best possible spirit ; that the Committee for Foreign Affairs (the Directory per interim of the Batavian Republic) desired most earnestly to see him without loss of time, in order to make the definitive arrangements ; and especially they prayed him to bring with him the deputy of the people of Ireland, which Daendels repeated two or three times in his letter. In consequence of this, I waited on the General, whom I found in his bed in the Court Imperiale, and received his orders to set off with Lewins without loss of time, and attend him at—

“*June 27th, the Hague ;* where we arrived accordingly, having travelled day and night. In the evening we went to the Comedie, where we met the General in a sort of public incognito ; that is to say, he had combed the powder out of his hair, and was in a plain regimental frock. After the play, we followed him to his lodgings at the Lion d'or, where he gave us a full detail of what was preparing in Holland. He began by telling us that the Dutch Governor-General Daendels, and Admiral Dewinter, were sincerely actuated by a desire to effectuate something striking to rescue their country from that state of oblivion and *decadence* into which it had fallen ; that by the most indefatigable exertions on their part, they had got together, at the Texel, sixteen sail of the line, and eight or ten frigates, all ready for sea, and in the highest condition ; that they intended to embark 15,000 men, the whole of their national troops, 3,000 stand of arms, 80 pieces of artillery, and money for their pay and subsistence for three months ; that he had the best opinion of the sincerity of all parties, and of the courage and conduct of the General and Admiral, but that here was the difficulty : The French Government had demanded that at least 5,000 French troops, the *elite* of the army, should be embarked, instead of a like number of Dutch, in which case, if the demand was acceded to, he would himself take the command of the united army, and set off for the Texel directly ; but that the Dutch Government made great difficulties, alleging a variety of reasons, of which some were good ; that they said the French troops would never submit to the discipline of the Dutch navy, and that, in that case, they could not pretend to enforce it on their own, without making unjust distinctions, and

giving a reasonable ground for jealousy and discontent to their army; 'but the fact is,' said Hoche, 'that the Committee, Daendels, and Dewinter, are anxious that the Batavian Republic should have the whole glory of the expedition, if it succeeds; they feel that their country has been forgotten in Europe, and they are risking everything, even to their last stake: for, if this fails, they are ruined—in order to restore the national character. The demand of the French Government is now before the Committee; if it is acceded to, I will go myself, and, at all events, I will present you both to the Committee; and we will probably then settle the matter definitively.' Both Lewins and I now found ourselves in a considerable difficulty. On the one side, it was an object of the greatest importance to have Hoche and his 5,000 grenadiers; on the other, it was most unreasonable to propose anything which could hurt the feelings of the Dutch people, at a moment when they were making unexampled exertions in our favour, and risking, as Hoche himself said, their last ship and last shilling to emancipate us. I cursed and swore like a dragoon; it went to my very heart's blood and midriff to give up the General and our brave lads, 5,000 of whom I would prefer to any 10,000 in Europe; on the other hand, I could not but see that the Dutch were perfectly reasonable in the desire to have the whole reputation of an affair prepared and arranged entirely at their expense, and at such an expense. I did not know what to say. Lewins, however, extricated himself and me with considerable address. After stating very well our difficulty, he asked Hoche whether he thought that Daendels would serve under his orders, and, if he refused, what effect that might have on the Batavian troops? I will never forget the magnanimity of Hoche on this occasion. He said he believed Daendels would not, and, therefore, that the next morning he would withdraw the demand with regard to the French troops, and leave the Dutch Government at perfect liberty to act as they thought proper. When it is considered that Hoche has a devouring passion for fame; that his great object, on which he has endeavoured to establish his reputation, is the destruction of the power of England; that he has, for two years, in a great degree, devoted himself to our business, and made the greatest exertions, including our memorable expedition, to emancipate us; that he sees, at last, the business likely to be accomplished by another, and, of course, all the glory he had promised to himself ravished from him; when, in addition to all this, it is considered that he could, by a word's speaking, prevent the possibility of that rival's moving one step, and find, at the same time, plausible reasons sufficient to justify



his own conduct,—I confess his renouncing the situation which he might command is an effort of very great virtue. It is true he is doing exactly what an honest man and a good citizen ought to do ; he is preferring the interests of his country to his own private views ; that, however, does not prevent my regarding his conduct, in this instance, with great admiration, and I shall never forget it. This important difficulty being removed, after a good deal of general discourse on our business, we parted late, perfectly satisfied with each other, and having fixed to wait on the Committee to-morrow in the forenoon. All reflections made, the present arrangement, if it has its dark, has its bright sides also, of which more hereafter.

“*June 28th.*—This morning, at ten, Lewins and I went with General Hoche to the Committee for Foreign Affairs, which we found sitting. There were eight or nine members, of whom I do not know all the names, together with General Daendels. Those whose names I learned, were citizens Hahn (who seemed to have great influence among them), Bekker, Van Leyden, and Grasveldt. General Hoche began by stating extremely well the history of our affairs, since he had interested himself in them ; he pressed, in the strongest manner that we could wish, the advantages to be reaped from the emancipation of Ireland, the almost certainty of success if the attempt were once made, and the necessity of attempting it, if at all, immediately. It was citizen Hahn who replied to him. He said he was heartily glad to find the measure sanctioned by so high an opinion as that of General Hoche ; that originally the object of the Dutch Government was to have invaded England, in order to have operated a diversion in favour of the French army, which it was hoped would have been in Ireland ; that circumstances being totally changed in that regard, they had yielded to the wishes of the French Government, and resolved to go into Ireland ; that, for this purpose, they had made the greatest exertions, and had now at the Texel an armament of 16 sail of the line, 10 frigates, 15,000 troops in the best condition, 80 pieces of artillery, and pay for the whole three months ; but that a difficulty had been raised within a few days, in consequence of a requisition of the Minister of Marine, Truget, who wished to have 5,000 French troops, instead of so many Dutch, to be disembarked in consequence. That this was a measure of extreme risk, inasmuch as the discipline of the Dutch navy was very severe, and such as the French troops would probably not submit to ; that, in that case, they could not pretend to enforce it with regard to their own troops, the consequence of which would be a relaxation of

all discipline. This was precisely what General Hoche told us last night. He immediately replied, that such being the case, he would take on himself to withdraw the Minister of Marine, and satisfy the Directory as to the justice of their observations ; and that he hoped all difficulty on that head being removed, they would press the embarkation without a moment's delay. It was easy to see the most lively satisfaction on all their faces, at this declaration of General Hoche, which certainly does him the greatest honour. General Daendels, especially, was beyond measure delighted. They told us then that they hoped all would be ready in a fortnight, and Hahn observed, that the same time, that as there was an English squadron which appeared almost every day at the mouth of the Texel, it was very much to be desired that the Brest fleet should, if possible, put to sea, in order to draw off at least a part of the British fleet, because, from the position of the Texel, the Dutch fleet was liable to be attacked in detail, in sailing out of the port ; and even if they beat the enemy, it would not be possible to proceed, as they must return to refit. To this, General Hoche replied, that the French fleet could not, he understood, be ready before two months, which put it out of the question ; and as to the necessity of returning to refit, he observed that, during the last war, the British and French fleets had often fought, both in the East and West Indies, and kept the seas after ; all that was necessary being to have on board the necessary articles of *rechange* ; besides, it was certainly the business of the Dutch fleet to avoid an action by all possible means. General Daendels observed that Admiral Dewinter desired nothing better than to measure himself with the enemy, but we all, that is to say, General Hoche, Lewins, and myself, cried out against it, his only business being to bring his convoy safe to its destination. A member of the committee, I believe it was Van Leyden, then asked us, supposing everything succeeded to our wish, what was the definite object of the Irish people. To which we replied categorically, that it was to throw off the yoke of England, break for ever the connection now existing with that country, and constitute ourselves a free and independent people. They all expressed their satisfaction at this reply, and Van Leyden observed that he had travelled through Ireland, and to judge from the luxury of the rich, and extreme misery of the poor, no country in Europe had so crying a necessity for a revolution. To which Lewins and I replied, as is most religiously the truth, that one great motive of our conduct in this business, was the conviction of the wretched state of our peasantry, and the determination, if possible, to

amend it. The political object of our visit being now nearly ascertained, Hahn, in the name of the Committee, observed that he hoped either Lewins or I would be of the expedition. To which Hoche replied, 'that I was ready to go,' and he made the offer, on my part, in a manner peculiarly agreeable to my feelings. It was then fixed that I should set off for the army of Sambre et Meuse for my trunk, and especially for my papers, and that Lewins should remain at the Hague, at the orders of the Committee, until my return, which might be seven or eight days. The meeting then broke up. We could not possibly desire to find greater attention to us, personally, or, which was far more important, greater zeal and anxiety to forward this expedition, in which the Dutch Government has thrown itself '*a corps perdu.*' They venture no less than the whole of their army and navy. As Hoche expressed it, 'they are like a man stripped to his breeches, who has one shilling left, which he throws in the lottery, in the hope of being enabled to buy a coat.'"

The mutations of history are sometimes strange. Here, in 1797, we find the Dutch nation preparing for a grand national effort to liberate and redeem the very same people whom a century before it had so powerfully contributed with the Prince of Orange and its "Dutch Blues," to hurl, prostrate under the feet of this very England which the Dutch Republic was now so eager to overthrow.

It deserves to be noticed, in justice to the Irish agents, both in Holland and in France, that they never contemplated bringing an overwhelming force to Ireland, such as might subdue the country to hold it in a state of subjection to France, like the Ligurian, or Cisalpine Republic. The "Secret Committee," already so often cited, which had under examination Messrs. Emmet, MacNeven, and O'Connor, admit this fact. "It appeared to the Committee, that the Executive of the Union, though desirous of obtaining assistance in men, arms, and money, yet were averse to a greater force being sent than might enable them to subvert the Government, and retain the power of the country in their own hands; but that the French showed a decided disinclination at all times to send any force to Ireland, except such as from its magnitude might not only give them the hopes of conquering the kingdom, but of retaining it afterwards as a French conquest, and of subjecting it to all the plunder and oppressions which other nations subdued or deceived by that nation had experienced. In Tone's journal, under date of 1st of July, occurs a passage showing how earnestly that true Irishmen deprecated a French conquest of his country:—"I then took



occasion to speak on a subject which had weighed very much upon my mind, I mean the degree of influence which the French might be disposed to arrogate to themselves in Ireland, and which I had great reason to fear would be greater than we might choose to allow them. In the *Gazette*, of that day, there was a proclamation of Buonaparte's addressed to the Government of Genoa, which I thought most grossly improper and indecent, as touching on the indispensable rights of the people. I read the most obnoxious passages to Hoche, and observed, that if Buonaparte commanded in Ireland, and were to publish there so indiscreet a proclamation, it would have a most ruinous effect; that in Italy such dictation might pass, but never in Ireland, where we understood our rights too well to submit to it. Hoche answered me, 'I understand you, but you may be at ease in that respect; Buonaparte has been my scholar, but he shall never be my master.'

Before proceeding to narrate the fortunes of this second grand expedition bound for Ireland, it will be well to consider the views of those Irishmen who had studied the subject, with regard to a point then extremely interesting, and which may again become interesting in the course of human events—namely, the most advisable or convenient harbours of Ireland for purposes of a landing hostile to England. This question is treated at length in a memoir, which was, during this same summer, intrusted to Dr. MacNeven, and was by him carried over to France, in order that no such blunder might again be made as the approach to the desolate mountainous coasts of Bear and Bantry. This memoir, singular to relate, fell into the hands of the British Government; but certainly not through any treachery on the part of Dr. MacNeven, who was a most excellent man; but O'Connor, Emmet, and MacNeven tell us, in their memoirs, that on their examination before the Secret Committee of the Lords the next year, they were astonished beyond measure to see the very original of that memoir lying on the table—so perfect was the spy system of England, both at home and abroad, maintained by an enormous expenditure of "Secret Service money."

The account which the Secret Committee has given us of that memoir is as follows:—The next communication of consequence was in June, 1797, when an accredited person went from hence to communicate with the French Directory by their desire; he went by Hamburgh, where he saw the French Minister, who made some difficulty about granting a passport, and demanded a memorial, which was written by the accredited person, and given to

the French Minister under the impression that the passport was not to be granted.

The memoir was written in English, and contained the objects of his mission according to the instructions which he had received from the Executive. It began by stating, that the appearance of the French in Bantry Bay, had encouraged the least confident of the Irish in the hope of throwing off the yoke of England with the assistance of France; that the event of that expedition had proved the facility of invading Ireland; that in the event of a second expedition, if the object were to take Cork, Oyster Haven would be the best place of debarkation; that the person who had been before accredited was instructed to point out Oyster Haven as the best place of debarkation; and it stated the precautions which had been taken, by throwing up works at Bantry, Fermoy, and Mallow. It further stated, that the system of the United Irishmen had made a rapid progress in the County of Cork, and that Bandon was become a second Belfast; that the system had made great progress in other counties, and that the people were now well inclined to assist the French; that 150,000 United Irishmen were organized and enrolled in Ulster, a great part of them regimented, and one-third ready to march out of the province. It detailed the number of the King's forces in Ulster, and their stations; recommended Lough Swilly as a place of debarkation in the North, and stated that the people in the peninsula of Donegal would join the French. It stated, also, the strength of the garrison in Londonderry, and that one regiment which made a part of it was supposed to be disaffected. It mentioned Killybegs also as a good place of debarkation, and stated that the Counties of Tyrone, Fermanagh, and Monaghan were amongst the best affected to the cause. In case of a landing at Killybegs, it recommended a diversion in Sligo, and stated, that a force of 10,000 United Irishmen might be collected to fall upon Enniskillen, which commanded the pass of Lough Erne; that it was easy to enter the Bay of Galway, but very difficult to get out of it; that the counties of Louth, Armagh, Westmeath, King's County, and City of Dublin, were the best organized; that the Catholic priests had ceased to be alarmed at the calumnies which had been propagated of French irreligion, and were well affected to the cause; that some of them had rendered great service in propagating with discreet zeal the system of the Union. It declared that the people of Ireland had a lively sense of gratitude to France for the part which she took, and also to Spain for the interest she took in the affairs of Ireland. It engaged on the

part of the National Directory, to reimburse the expenses of France in the expedition which had failed, and of another to be undertaken. The number of troops demanded was a force not exceeding 10,000, and not less than 5,000 men. It stated that a brigade of English artillery had been already sent over, and that a large body of troops would probably be sent if Ireland were attacked. A considerable quantity of artillery and ammunition, with a large staff, and a body of engineers, and as many Irish officers as possible, whose fidelity they were assured of, were demanded as necessary to accompany the expedition. A recommendation was given to separate the Irish seamen who were prisoners of war from the British, supposing they would be ready to join in an expedition to liberate their country. It further recommended a proclamation to be published by the French General, on his arrival there, that the French came as allies to deliver the country, not to conquer it; it also recommended to the Directory to make the independence of Ireland an indispensable condition of the treaty of peace then pending; and stated, that a proceeding so authentic could not be disguised or misrepresented, and would very much encourage the people of Ireland. It contained also an assurance, that the Irish Militia would join the French if they landed in considerable force.\*

The difficulty in the way of the Batavian expedition being removed, by the generous self-abnegation of General Hoche (though his heart was set upon this service), great activity was exerted to make everything ready. Tone was to accompany the Dutch force, with the same rank which he held in the French. What greatly increased the hopes and spirits of Tone and his allies, was the famous "Mutiny of the Nore," on board the English fleet, off the mouth of the Thames, which threatened for a few weeks to disable completely the naval power of England. The mutiny, however, was with some difficulty quelled by some sanguinary punishments, and also by increasing the pay of the seamen; so that the British Channel Fleet was ready for service again, as the Dutch soon found out to their cost. On the 4th of July, we find Wolfe Tone at the Hague, ready to undertake his duties. We copy the following extracts from Tone's Journal:—

"*July 4th.*—Instantly on my arrival I waited on General

\* The topographical researches into the capabilities of harbours for invasion, must be much facilitated by the many excellent maps of Ireland published within these last few years; some of which also afford a very perfect idea of the nature of the country inland. At the period spoken of in the text, the best map of Ireland was, perhaps, that of Beaumont, a very useless one for strategical purposes.



Daendels, whom I found on the point of setting out for the Texel. He read the letter, and told me everything should be settled with regard to my rank, and that I should receive two months' pay in advance, to equip me for the campaign. His reception of me was extremely friendly. I staid with Lewins, at the Hague, three or four days, whilst my regimentals, &c., were making up, and at length, all being ready, we parted, he setting off for Paris, to join General Hoche, and I for the Texel, to join General Daendels.

*"July 8th.*—Arrived early in the morning at the Texel, and went immediately on board the Admiral's ship, the *Vryheid*, of 74 guns, a superb vessel. Found General Daendels aboard, who presented me to Admiral Dewinter, who commands the expedition. I am exceedingly pleased with both one and the other; there is a frankness and candour in their manners which is highly interesting.

*"July 10th.*—I have been boating about the fleet, and aboard several of the vessels; they are in very fine condition, incomparably better than the fleet at Brest, and I learn from all hands that the best possible spirit reigns in both soldiers and sailors. Admiral Duncan, who commands the English fleet off the Texel, sent in yesterday an officer with a flag of truce, apparently with a letter, but in fact to reconnoitre our force. Dewinter was even with him: for he detained his messenger, and sent back the answer by an officer of his own, with instructions to bring back an exact account of the force of the enemy.

*"July 11th.*—This day our flag of truce is returned, and the English officer released. Duncan's fleet is of eleven sail of the line, of which three are three-deckers."

When both fleet and army were quite ready, by some fatality similar to that which delayed the Brest fleet before, the wind set in steadily in an adverse direction, and so continued day after day, week after week.\* During the whole of the two months of July and August the departure was postponed; the supplies put on board the fleet were nearly exhausted; and it was known that

\*It is painful to see how Tone's fiery spirit, already irritated by disappointment, chafed at this cruel delay. July 17th, he says in his diary: "I hope the wind will not play us a trick. It is terribly foul this evening. Hang it, and damn it for me! I am in a rage, which is truly astonishing, and can do nothing to help myself. Well! well!"

*"July 18th.*—The wind is as foul as possible this morning; it cannot be worse. Hell! Hell! Hell! Allah! Allah! Allah! I am in a most devouring rage.

*"July 19th.*—Wind foul still. Horrible! Horrible! Admiral Dewinter and I endeavour to pass away the time, playing the flute, which he does very well; we have some good duets, and that is some relief."

Admiral Duncan, who cruised outside, had been reinforced considerably. Changes of plan were proposed, and England or Scotland was to be the object of the attempt, not Ireland. When General Daendals mentioned these new projects to Wolfe Tone, the latter became seriously alarmed. He says in his journal :—“These are, most certainly, very strong reasons, and, unfortunately, the wind gives them every hour fresh weight. I answered, that I did not see at present any solid objection to propose to his system ; and that all I had to say, was, that, if the Batavian Republic sent but a corporal's guard to Ireland, I was ready to make one. So here is our expedition in a hopeful way. It is most terrible. Twice, within nine months, has England been saved by the wind. It seems as if the very elements had conspired to perpetuate our slavery, and protect the insolence and oppression of our tyrants. What can I do at this moment ? Nothing. The people of Ireland will now lose all spirit and confidence in themselves and their chiefs, and God only knows whether, if we were even able to effectuate a landing with 3,000 men, they might act with courage and decision.”

In the interval of waiting at the Texel, two additional agents of the Irish Union made their appearance in Holland. These were Tennant and Lowry ; with instructions to make sure, if possible, of some effectual aid, either from France or Holland. They put themselves at once into communication with Tone and Lewins. Nothing seemed immediately possible in that direction, at least until after this Dutch armament should be definitely given up ; and the Batavian authorities were very reluctant to give it up. General Daendals charged Tone with a mission to the headquarters of the Army of the Sambre and Meuse, in order to confer with General Hoche ; and when he arrived, he found Hoche dying. He writes :—

“*September 18th and 19th.*—My fears, with regard to General Hoche, were but too well founded. He died this morning at four o'clock. His lungs seem to be quite gone. This most unfortunate event has so confounded and distressed me, that I know not what to think, nor what will be the consequences. Wrote to my wife, and to General Daendals instantly.”

Tone evidently believed that Dewinter's Dutch fleet would never sail at all ; therefore, after the death of Hoche, he obtained leave to go to Paris, where he was to meet his wife and children.

It is impossible to over-estimate the importance of the loss which the Irish cause in France sustained in the death of General Hoche. He had thoroughly made that cause his own, through his warm admiration for his Irish *aide*, as well as from his settled

conviction, formed on military principles, that to strike England in Ireland is the surest and easiest way to destroy her power. It is now known that Napoleon Buonaparte, then the rival of Hoche, came afterwards to entertain strongly this opinion concerning Ireland, although, unfortunately, he was not then duly impressed with its importance. At St. Helena, he said of Hoche, that "he was one of the first of French generals;" and that if he had landed in Ireland, he would have succeeded in the great enterprize. And if he had but lived another year, his influence might have availed to direct upon the coast of Ireland that fine fleet and army which made the unavailing and disastrous invasion of Egypt.

While Tone seems to have abandoned every hope of decisive action on the part of the Batavian Republic, a sudden resolution was taken at the Hague. In the beginning of October, the British Commander quitted his station, and went to Yarmouth Roads to refit. A peremptory order was despatched by the Dutch Government to Admiral Dewinter to put to sea. On the morning of the 11th of October, Duncan, having made great haste, came in view of the Dutch fleet near the coast of Holland, off a place called Camperdown. The two fleets were nearly equal in number of ships, but the English were much superior in weight of metal. Dewinter, seeing a battle inevitable, engaged with the utmost gallantry. After a bloody fight, which the Dutch sustained with an intrepidity approaching desperation, Dewinter's ship struck, a sinking wreck. Ten Dutch ships of the line and two frigates were captured; Duncan became Lord Camperdown; and there was an end of Holland as a great naval power.

Thus there was, and continued to be, a strange fatality dooming the hopes of Ireland in foreign aid to a series of painful disappointments. There were, after this, two more expeditions on a small scale, both French, and both intended to aid the Irish insurrection. As for the "Army of England," which began to be formed in this very month of October, it is needless to enter into the detail of that operation, as it was really never intended for England at all, still less for Ireland. Napoleon Buonaparte was made Commander-in-Chief. While there was apparently busy preparation in the Channel ports of France, Wolfe Tone was in the highest spirits; and had several interviews with the conqueror of Italy, who seemed bent at last upon the grand enterprize of going straight to London, promised Tone that he should be employed in the expedition, and requested him to make out a list of the leading Irish refugees then in Paris, who "would all," he said "be undoubtedly employed." So passed the winter and the



spring. Two passages from Tone's journal will tell all that is needful to be told of the *Armée d'Angleterre* :—

"*May 19th.*—I do not know what to think of our expedition. It is certain that the whole left wing of the army of England is, at this moment, in full march back to the Rhine ; Buonaparte is, God knows where, and the clouds seem thickening more and more in Germany, where I have no doubt, Pitt is moving heaven and hell to embroil matters, and divert the storm which was almost ready to fall on his head.

"*May 24th and 25th.*—It is certain that Buonaparte is at Toulon, and embarked since the 14th ; his speech, as I suspected, is not as it was given in the last journals. The genuine one I read to-day, and there are two sentences in it which puzzle me completely. In the first, at the beginning of the address, he tells the troops that they form a wing of the army of England ; in the second, towards the end, he reminds them that they have the glory of the French name to sustain in countries and seas the most distant. What does that mean ? Is he going, after all, to India ? Will he make a short cut to London by way of Calcutta ? I begin foully to suspect it."

In fact, the expedition to Egypt was already at sea ; Tone remained attached to that portion of the "Army of England" which was still quartered in the North of France, and passed his time—between Rouen and Havre ; Lewins continued to represent the United Irishmen at Paris with great tact and honesty. But in the meantime, Lord Castlereagh had already, by his "judicious measures," caused the premature explosion of the insurrection in Ireland ; and the island was now ringing with the combat of Oulart Hill and the storm of Enniscorthy.

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## CHAPTER XXXII.

1798.

DURING all the time of these negotiations in France, the British Government was most intimately acquainted with everything the United Irishmen were doing or contemplating, by means of great multitudes of spies ; many, or most of these spies being themselves sworn members of the United Irish Society ; whose business was not only to watch and report, but also to urge on and promote the preparations for insurrection, and who were duly paid at the Castle

out of the "Secret Service Money."\* The system of not merely paying informers for information, but hiring them beforehand to join illegal societies, and there recommend and urge forward the boldest and most illegal counsels, in order to betray their trusting confederates, is a system peculiar to the British Government in Ireland; and not paralleled in atrocity and baseness by anything known to us in the functions of a French or Austrian police. During the whole year 1797 this "battalion of testimony" was in a state of high organization and efficiency; and greatly aided in causing the insurrection to burst out at the very day and hour when the Castle wished for it. It would be an endless task to recount all the oppressions which in the latter part of this year goaded the people at last to seek a remedy in desperate resistance; but the case of Orr is too remarkable and notorious to be passed over.

A prosecution was instituted against the *Press* newspaper in 1798, for seditious libel on Lord Camden's government, contained in certain letters which appeared in that paper in the latter part of 1797. The subject matter of the libel in the *Press*, signed MARCUS (for the publication of which the printer was prosecuted by the Government), was the refusal of Lord Camden to extend mercy to a person of the name of William Orr, of respectability, and remarkable for his popularity, who had been capitally convicted at Carrickfergus of administering the oath of the United Irishmen's Society, and was the first person who had been so convicted. Poems were written, sermons were preached; after-dinner speeches, and after supper still stronger speeches, were made, of no ordinary vehemence, about the fate of Orr and the conduct of Lord Camden, which certainly, in the peculiar circumstances of this case, was bad, or rather stupidly base and odiously unjust.

The scribes of the United Irishmen wrote up the memory of the man whom Camden had allowed to be executed with a full knowledge of the foul means taken to obtain a conviction, offi-

\* Dr. Madden has procured and published the accounts of this important branch of the public service for 1797-98. These spies were of all grades of society, and their functions were very various. Some, like Reynolds and Armstrong, men of education and position, were to associate with the leaders, and carry all their secrets to the Castle; others, like James O'Brien, were to foment treasons in public houses, and swear away, at assizes, the lives of those who trusted them. The record is a very curious one; and it may be some satisfaction to us, that if our country has been always bought and sold for money, we can at least examine and check the accounts, and estimate with considerable accuracy the money value of a traitor (or "loyal man"), according to his talents and opportunities. For seventy years past, it has cost the treasury heavily to purchase "loyal men" in Ireland, from Reynolds down to Nagle.

cially conveyed to him by persons every way worthy of credit and of undoubted loyalty.

The evident object of the efforts to make this cry "*Remember Orr*," stir up the people to rebellion, cannot be mistaken—that object was to single out an individual case of suffering in the cause of the Union, for the sympathy of the nation, and to turn that sympathy to the account of the cause. Orr's case presented to the people of Ireland, at that period, a few *extraordinary* features of iniquity and of injustice. He was a noted, active, and popular country member of the Society of United Irishmen. He was executed on account of the notoriety of that circumstance, not on account of the sufficiency of the evidence, or the justice of the conviction that was obtained against him; for the crown witness, Wheatly, immediately after the trial, acknowledged that he had perjured himself; and some of the jury came forward likewise, and admitted that they were drunk when they gave their verdict; and these facts, duly deposed to and attested, were laid before the Viceroy, Lord Camden, by Sir John Macartney, the magistrate who had caused Orr to be arrested, and who, to his honour be it told, when he found the practices that had been resorted to, used every effort, though fruitlessly, to move Lord Camden to save the prisoner.

William Orr, of Ferranshane, in the County of Antrim, was charged with administering the United Irishman's oath, in his own house, to a soldier of the name of Wheatly. He was the first person indicted under the act which made that offence a capital felony (36 Geo. III.). His father was a small farmer in comfortable circumstances, and the proprietor of a bleach-green. James Hope, who was intimately acquainted with all the circumstances of the case, informed Dr. Madden, "that William Orr was not actually the person who administered the oath to the soldier. The person who administered the oath was William M'Keever, a delegate from the City of Derry to the Provincial Committee, who afterwards made his escape to America."

In a letter of Miss M'Cracken, dated 27th of September, 1797, addressed to her brother, then in Kilmainham Jail, is found the following reference to the recent trial of Orr:—"Orr's trial has clearly proved, that there is neither justice nor mercy to be expected. Even the greatest aristocrats here join in lamenting his fate; but his greatness of mind renders him an object of envy and of admiration rather than of compassion. I am told that his wife is gone with a letter from Lady Londonderry to her brother on his behalf. . . . You will be surprised when I tell you that old Archibald Thompson, of Cushendall, was foreman of the



jury, and it is thought will lose his senses if Mr. Orr's sentence is carried into execution, as he appears already quite distracted at the idea of a person being condemned to die through his ignorance, as it seems he did not at all understand the business of a jurymen. *However, he held out from the forenoon till six o'clock in the morning* of the day following, though, it is said, he was beaten, and threatened with being *wrecked*, and not left a sixpence in the world, on his refusing to bring in a verdict of guilty. Neither would they let him taste of the supper *and the drink which was sent to the rest, and of which they partook to such a beastly degree.* It was not, therefore, much to be wondered at, that an infirm old man should not have sufficient resolution to hold out against such treatment.

(Signed) MARY M'CRACKEN."

Orr was defended by Curran and Sampson. The judges before whom he was tried were Lord Yelverton and Judge Chamberlaine. The jury retired at six in the evening *to consider their verdict.* They sat up, *deliberating,* all night, and returned into court at six the following morning. The jury inquired if they might find a qualified verdict as to the prisoner's guilt. The Judge directed them to give a special verdict on the general issue. They retired again, and returned shortly with a verdict of guilty, and a strong recommendation of the prisoner to mercy. Next day, Orr was brought up for judgment, when, after an unsuccessful motion in arrest of judgment, chiefly on the grounds of the drunkenness of the jury, which Judge Chamberlaine would not admit of being made "the foundation of any motion to the Court," Yelverton pronounced sentence of death, "in a voice scarcely articulate, and at the conclusion of his address burst into tears." Orr said, pointing to the jury, "*That jury* has convicted me of being a felon. My own heart tells me that their conviction is a falsehood; and that I am not a felon. If they have found me guilty improperly, it is worse for them than for me. I can forgive them. I wish to say only one word more, and that is, to declare on this awful occasion, and in the presence of God, that the evidence against me was grossly perjured—grossly and wickedly perjured!"

The witness, Wheatly, made an affidavit before a magistrate acknowledging his having sworn falsely against Orr. Two of the jury made depositions, setting forth that they had been induced to give a verdict contrary to their opinion, when under the influence of liquor. Two others made statements that they had been menaced by the other jurors with denunciations and the

wrecking of their properties, if they did not comply with their wishes.

James Orr, in the *Press* newspaper of the 28th of October, 1797, published a statement respecting his interference, with a view of saving his brother's life, to the following effect:—"He, James Orr, had been applied to by many gentlemen to get his brother William to make a confession of his guilt, as a condition on which they would use their interest to have his life spared. The high sheriff, Mr. Skeffington, and the sovereign of Belfast, the Rev. Mr. Bristowe, were among the number—the former undertaking to get the Grand Jury to sign a memorial in his favour. James Orr immediately went to his brother, and the latter indignantly refused to make any such confession, for 'he had not been guilty of the crime he was charged with.' James Orr not being able to induce him to sign it, returned to Belfast and wrote out a confession, similar in terms to that required by Skeffington and Bristowe, and *forged* his brother's name. The forged document was then turned to the account it was required for. A respite had been granted; but the weakness of the brother was made instrumental to the death of the prisoner. The shaken verdict of the drunken jury, of the perjured witness, was not suffered to preserve the prisoner. The forged testimony of his guilt was brought against him. The promises under which that document was obtained were forgotten, and thus 'a surreptitious declaration,' swindled from the fears of an afflicted family, was made the instrument to intercept the stream of mercy, and counteract the report of the Judge (one of the judges, namely, Yelverton), who tried him." Orr was executed outside of Carrickfergus, on the 14th of October, 1797, in his thirty-first year, solemnly protesting his innocence of the crime laid to his charge.

The act of James Orr might have led the executive into error; but William Orr wrote a letter to Lord Camden, dated the 10th of October, plainly informing his lordship of the forgery committed by his brother, and that the confession imputed to him "was base and false;" but stating, if mercy was extended to him, "he should not fail to entertain the most dutiful sense of gratitude for such an act of justice as well as mercy." On the day of the execution, the great body of the inhabitants of Carrickfergus quitted the town, to avoid witnessing the fate of Orr.

A person who visited Orr previously to his trial, speaks of his personal appearance and address as highly prepossessing. His apparel was new and fashionable—there was a remarkable neat-

ness in his attire. The only thing approaching the foppery of patriotism was a narrow piece of green ribbon round his neck. He was six feet two inches in height, particularly well made—in fact, his person was a model of symmetry, strength and gracefulness. He wore his hair short and well powdered. The expression of his countenance was frank and manly. He possessed a sound understanding, strong affections, and a kindly disposition. In speaking of the state of the country to his visitor, who remarked that the Government was disposed to act in a conciliatory spirit towards the country, he said:—"No, no; you may depend upon it that there is some system laid down, *which has for its object murder and devastation.*" He added, respecting the treatment of the Dissenters as well as the Catholics, "Irishmen of every denomination must now stand or fall together."

Thus a variety of depositions establishing the drunkenness of the jury and the perjury of Wheatly were laid before the Lord Lieutenant. One deposition was of the Rev. George Macartney, a magistrate of the County of Antrim, respecting Wheatly's being brought forward by Mr. Kemmis, and on his (Wheatly's) coming into court, relating to Mr. Macartney his having seen a Dissenting clergyman, of the name of Eder, whom he had known elsewhere, and was sure he was brought there to invalidate his testimony. Another deposition was that of the clergyman referred to, stating that he had accompanied a brother clergyman, the Rev. A. Montgomery, to visit a sick soldier, apparently deranged, named Wheatly, a Scotchman, who had attempted to commit suicide; that he confessed to Mrs. Hueys, in whose house he then was, that he was in Colonel Durham's regiment, and had committed a murder, which weighed heavily upon his mind, and that he had been instigated to give false evidence against William Orr, of which crime he sincerely repented. A similar deposition, before Lord O'Neil, was made by the Rev. Mr. Montgomery. Two of the jury made depositions respecting their drunkenness. Two others made statements of the menaces that had been used by the other jurors. But all were of no avail. Lord Camden was deaf to all the representations made to him. All the waters of the ocean will not wash away the stain his obduracy on this occasion has left on his character. Better fifty thousand times for his fame it were, if he had never seen Ireland. The fate of Orr lies heavy on the memory of Lord Camden.

The friends of Earl Camden in vain seek to cast the responsibility of this act on his subordinates in the Irish Government. They say he was a passive instrument in the hands of others.



The prerogative of mercy, however, was given to him, and not to them. On the 26th of October, 1797, a letter addressed to Earl Camden appeared in the *Press*, signed Marcus, ably and eloquently written, but unquestionably libellous, commenting on the conduct of his lordship in this case. Marcus used these words in referring to it:—"The death of Mr. Orr, the nation has pronounced one of the most sanguinary and savage acts that has disgraced the laws. Let not the nation be told that you are a passive instrument in the hands of others. If passive you be, then is your office a shadow indeed. If an active instrument, as you ought to be, you did not perform the duty which the laws required of you. You did not exercise the prerogative of mercy—that mercy which the law entrusted to you for the safety of the subject. Innocent, it appears, he was. His blood has been shed, and the precedent is awful. . . . Feasting in your castle, in the midst of your myrmidons and bishops, you have little concerned yourself about the expelled and miserable cottager, whose dwelling at the moment of your mirth was in flames, his wife or his daughter suffering violence at the hands of some commissioned ravager, his son agonizing on the bayonet, and his helpless infants crying in vain for mercy. These are lamentations that disturb not the hour of carousal or intoxicated counsels. The constitution has reeled to its centre—Justice herself is not only blind, but drunk, and deaf, like Festus, to the words of soberness and truth.

"Let the awful execution of Mr. Orr be a lesson to all unthinking jurors, and let them cease to flatter themselves, that any interest or recommendation of theirs and of the presiding judge, can stop the course of carnage which sanguinary, and I do not fear to say, unconstitutional, laws have ordered to be loosed. Let them remember that, like Macbeth, the servants of the Crown have waded so far in blood, that they find it easier to go on than to go back."

Finnerty was found guilty, and sentenced to be imprisoned for two years, to pay a fine of £20, and to give security for future good behaviour for seven years. Mr. Curran's speech in defence of this printer, Finnerty, is a model of bold, impassioned, and indignant pleading, which has, perhaps, never been matched since in a court of justice. One passage of this great speech rises above the immediate case of the orator's client, and gives a bold and true picture of the policy of the Government:—"The learned counsel has asserted that the paper which he prosecutes (the *Press*) is only part of a system formed to misrepresent the state of Ireland and the conduct of its Government. Do you

not therefore discover that his object is to procure a verdict to sanction the Parliaments of both countries in refusing all inquiry into your grievances? Let me ask you, then, are you prepared to say, upon your oaths, that those measures of coercion which are daily practised are absolutely necessary, and ought to be continued? It is not upon Finnerty you are sitting in judgment; but you are sitting in judgment upon the lives and liberties of the inhabitants of more than half of Ireland. You are to say, that it is a foul proceeding to condemn the Government of Ireland; that it is a foul act; founded in foul motives, and originating in falsehood and sedition; that it is an attack upon a Government under which the people are prosperous and happy; that justice is here administered with mercy; that the statements made in Great Britain are false—are the effusions of party and of discontent; that all is mildness and tranquillity; that there are no burnings, no transportations; that you never travel by the light of conflagrations; that the jails are not crowded month after month, from which prisoners are taken out, not for trial, but for *embarkation*! These are the questions upon which, I say, you must virtually decide. . . I tell you, therefore, gentlemen of the jury, it is not with respect to Mr. Orr or Mr. Finnerty that your verdict is now sought; you are called upon, on your oaths, to say that the Government is wise and merciful; the people prosperous and happy; that military law ought to be continued; that the Constitution could not with safety be restored to Ireland; and that the statements of a contrary import by your advocates in either country are libellous and false. I tell you these are the questions; and I ask you if you can have the front to give the expected answer in the face of a community who know the country as well as you do. Let me ask you how you could reconcile with such a verdict the jails, the tenders, the gibbets, the conflagrations, the murders, the proclamations that we hear of every day in the streets, and see every day in the country? What are the processions of the learned counsel himself, circuit after circuit? Merciful God! what is the state of Ireland, and where shall you find the wretched inhabitant of this land? You may find him, perhaps, in jail, the only place of security, I had almost said of ordinary habitation! If you do not find him there, you may see him flying with his family from the flames of his own dwelling—lighted to his dungeon by the conflagration of his hovel; or you may find his bones bleaching on the green fields of his country; or you may find him tossing on the surface of the ocean, and mingling his groans with those tempests, less savage than his persecutors, that drift him to a re-

turnless distance from his family and his home, *without charge, or trial, or sentence.*"

When Mr. Curran came to speak of that part of the publication under trial, which stated that informers were brought forward by hopes of remuneration—"Is that," he said, "a foul assertion? Or will you, upon your oaths, say to the sister country that there are no such abominable instruments of destruction as informers used in the State prosecutions of Ireland? Let me honestly ask you, what do you feel, when in my hearing—when in the face of this audience—you are asked to give a verdict that every man of us, and every man of you, know, by the testimony of your own eyes, to be utterly and absolutely false? I speak not now of the *public proclamation for informers, with a promise of secrecy and extravagant reward.* I speak not of those unfortunate wretches who have been so often transferred from the table to the dock, and from the dock to the pillory. I speak of what your own eyes have seen, day after day, during the progress of this commission, while you attended this court—the number of horrid miscreants who acknowledged, upon their oaths, that they had come from the seat of Government—from the very chambers of the Castle (where they had been worked upon by the fear of death and hope of compensation to give evidence against their fellows), that the mild, the wholesome, and the merciful councils of this Government are holden over those catacombs of living death, where the wretch that is buried a *man*, lies till his heart has time to fester and dissolve, and is then dug up a *witness*. Is this a picture created by a hag-ridden fancy, or is it a fact? Have you not seen him, after his resurrection from that tomb, make his appearance upon your table, the image of life and death, and supreme arbiter of both? Have you not marked, when he entered, how the stormy wave of the multitude retired at his approach? Have you not seen how the human heart, bowed to the awful supremacy of his power in the undissembled homage of deferential horror? How his glance, like the lightning of heaven, seem to rive the body of the accused, and mark it for the grave, while his voice warned the devoted wretch of woe and death—a death which no innocence can escape, no art elude, no force resist, no antidote prevent! There *was* an antidote—a juror's oath; but even that adamant chain, which bound the integrity of man to the throne of eternal justice, is solved and molten in the breath which issues from the mouth of the informer. Conscience swings from her moorings; the appalled and affrighted juror speaks what his soul abhors, and consults his own safety in the surrender of the victim—



—Et quæ sibi quisque timebat,  
Unius in miseri exitium conversa tulere.

Informers are worshipped in the temple of justice, even as the Devil has been worshipped by pagans and savages—even so in this wicked country is the informer an object of judicial idolatry—even so is he soothed by the music of human groans—even so is he placated and incensed by the fumes and by the blood of human sacrifices.”

This extraordinary speech of Mr. Curran is not given here as an example of rhetoric. In fact, there is no rhetoric in it; his description is but a faint and pale image of the horrible truth; and the informer, O'Brien, was only one of that immense “battalion of testimony,” which was now regularly drilled and instructed at the Castle of Dublin. Through these foul means the administration was kept fully informed of the designs, the force and the *personnel* of the United Irishmen; it was also enabled, by the same means, to make considerable progress in the grand English policy of sowing dissensions and bad feeling between Catholics and Dissenters. On one side were the honest, tolerant and self-sacrificing leaders of the United Irish Society endeavouring to heal the animosities of ages, to make the people know and trust one another in order to unite for the common good of their unhappy country. On the other was Mr. Pitt, ably seconded by Lord Clare and by Castlereagh, and their dreadful army of spies and secret emissaries, carrying all over the country and scattering broadcast mysterious rumours of intended massacres and assassinations—industriously renewing all the old stories of the “horrors of the Inquisition” (which, indeed, were never so horrible as the horrors of the Penal Laws). A paper was even carefully circulated purporting to contain a *printed* list of persons marked out for assassination. Lord Moira, in his place in the English House of Lords, produced this document in debate, describing thus:—“He held now in his hand a paper printed, the contents of which were too shocking to read; its avowed object was to point out innocent men, by name, to the poinard of assassins. It loaded his Majesty with the most opprobrious epithets, and reviled the English nation with every term of contumely, affirming it to be the duty of every Irishman to wrest from the hands of English ruffians the property which these English ruffians had wrested from their ancestors.”

That this pretended list was the production of some of the Castle emissaries, there can be no doubt. The Lord Chancellor of England declared that he believed the list to be a genuine programme of the “horrid conspiracy” then hatching in Ireland.

Lord Moira said in reply :—" As to the paper to which the noble and learned lord, and the noble Secretary had alluded, concerning the names of persons who were marked out for future assassination, he confessed, *he suspected it to be an invention to justify or to support the measures* which had been adopted in Ireland, and of which he had already complained. He suspected this the more, because no printer of a newspaper could have had it from any authentic source, for no man concerned in a conspiracy for assassination would communicate the intention of himself and colleagues. He wished to speak of assassins as he felt, with the greatest indignation and abhorrence ; but he must also add, that he believed that they originated in Ireland from private malice and revenge, and would do so from any party that happened to be predominant, while the present dreadful system continued. It was not by a general system of terror that it was to be prevented."

It is easy to conceive, however, what fearful use could be made of all these bold forgeries and wild rumours in the hands of the Castle agents, to exasperate the Protestants, create "alarm," and stop the good work of *Union*. From one cause or another, it is evident, that towards the close of the year 1797, the Union rather abated than increased. One unequivocal symptom of its decline was the renovation of dissension between the Dissenters and the Catholics in the North. Sir Richard Musgrave, from an anonymous acquaintance, reports, that most of the Presbyterians separated from the Papists in the year 1797 ; some from "principle, some because they doubted the sincerity of persons in that order ; and others, foreseeing that the plot must fail and end in their destruction, took advantage of the proclamation of the 17th of May, and renounced their associates. Numbers withdrew because they doubted of success without foreign assistance. The Presbyterians of the Counties of Down and Antrim, where they are very numerous, and where they are warmly attached to the Union from pure republican principles, thought they could succeed without the Papists."

Mr. Plowden bears nearly the same testimony :—" Certain it is," says he, "that the Northern Unionists generally held back from this time ; the Protestants of Ulster were originally Scotch, and still retain much of that guarded policy, which so peculiarly characterizes the inhabitants of North Britain. Some barbarous murders in different parts of the kingdom were committed ; but they do not appear to have been perpetrated by members of the Union, or persons in any manner connected with them. By the report of the Secret Committee, it appears, that from the summer

of 1797 the disaffected entertained no serious intention of hazarding an effort independent of foreign assistance, until the middle of March. Their policy was to risk nothing so long as their party was gaining strength. Whatever was the immediate cause of the Union's falling off, we find that from the autumn of 1797 the Roman Catholics, first in the North, and afterwards successively throughout the kingdom, published addresses and resolutions expressive of their horror of the principles of the United Irishmen, and pledging themselves to be loyal and zealous in the defence and support of the King and Constitution. The northern addresses admitted the fact, and lamented that many of the Catholic body had been seduced into the Union, and they deprecated the attempts which were made to create dissension amongst persons of different religions. This example was followed by the generality of the Dissenters. If addresses were tests of loyalty, his Majesty had not more loyal subjects throughout the whole extent of the British Empire, than the Irish in the beginning of 1798. Scarcely a parish throughout the kingdom, scarcely a dissenting meeting-house, from which an address of loyalty was not issued, signed by the priest or minister of the flock."

The Catholic addresses, of which Mr. Plowden speaks, were chiefly procured by the influence of the bishops and higher clergy, who were much relied upon at this time, as well as frequently since, to keep the higher classes of Catholics "loyal" to the English Government. The Catholic College of Maynooth had been incorporated by law in June 1795, and had been opened in the following October for students. Thus for the first time Catholic young men could be educated for the priesthood in their own country without incurring the penalty of death or transportation. The Parliamentary grant, which had amounted to £8,000, was increased to £10,000 in February, 1798, on motion of Mr. Secretary Pelham, who undertook, in this debate, to reply to the furious and foaming declamation of Dr. Duigenan. This was a great step in the way of conciliation; and it is further certain that members of the Government deceived the Catholic bishops by implied promises to complete the emancipation at an early day. Indeed, Dr. Hussey, Bishop of Waterford, in a pastoral of his this year, assures his flock very positively:—"The Popery laws are upon the eve of being extinguished for ever; and may no wicked hand ever again attempt to divide this land, by making religious distinctions a mask to divide, to disturb, to oppress it." Thus the bishops and most of the clergy were secured to the English party in the approaching struggle—and by the same treacherous artifice by which they were made generally favourable



to the Legislative "Union" two years later; namely, by holding out the hope of speedy emancipation. These hopes were disappointed; the promises were broken, and the Catholics suffered under all their disabilities for thirty years longer.

The strength of the United Irish Society then, as we have seen, was in the North in a great measure broken up. In the other provinces it was, however, growing and strengthening; but without occasioning either disorder or crime; rather, indeed, preventing all evil of that description. This state of things began to surprise and alarm Mr. Pitt, who found the "conspiracy" becoming rather too extensive and dangerous for his purposes; for a moment he felt he might possibly get beyond his depth, and he conceived the necessity of forcing a premature explosion, by which he might excite sufficient horror throughout the country to serve his purpose, and be able to suppress the conspiracy in the bud, which might be beyond his power should it arrive at its maturity.

Individually, Lord Camden, was an excellent man, and, in ordinary times, would have been an acquisition to the country, but he was made a cruel instrument in the hands of Mr. Pitt, and seemed to have no will of his own; so that, although we are assured by Sir Jonah Barrington that he was personally and privately a most amiable person, his name will always be pronounced with horror and execration by Irishmen, as the official head of the Irish Government in these dreadful years of the reign of terror.

On a review of the state of Ireland at that period, it must be obvious that the design of Mr. Pitt to effect some mysterious measure in Ireland was now, through the unaccountable conduct of the Irish Government, beginning to develope itself. The seeds of insurrection, which had manifested themselves in Scotland and in England, were, by the vigour and promptitude of the British Government, rapidly crushed; and, by the reports of Parliament, Lord Melville had obtained and published prints of the different pikes manufactured in Scotland, long before that weapon had been manufactured by the Irish peasantry. But in Ireland, though it appeared, from public documents, that Government had full and accurate information of the Irish United Societies, and that their leaders and chiefs were well-known to the British Ministry, at the same period, and by the same means that England and Scotland were kept tranquil, so might have been Ireland.

Mr. Pitt, however, found he had temporized to the extremity of prudence; the disaffected had not yet appeared as a collected army, but, in his opinion nevertheless, prompt and decisive measures became absolutely indispensable. The Earl of Car-

hampton, Commander-in-Chief in Ireland, first expressed his dissatisfaction at Mr. Pitt's inexplicable proceedings. His Lordship had but little military experience, but he was a man of courage and decision, ardent and obstinate; he determined, right or wrong, to annihilate the conspiracy. Without the consent of the Irish Government he had commanded the troops, that on all symptoms of insurrectionary movements, they should act without waiting for the presence of any civil power. Martial law had not then been proclaimed. He went, therefore, a length which could not possibly be supported; his orders were countermanded by the Lord Lieutenant; but he refused to obey the Viceroy, under colour that he had no rank in the army.

Lord Carhampton found that the troops in the garrison of Dublin were indoctrinated by the United Irishmen; he, therefore, withdrew them, and formed two distinct camps on the south and north, some miles from the capital, and thereby, as he conceived, prevented all intercourse of the army with the disaffected of the metropolis. Both measures were disapproved of by the Lord Lieutenant, whom Lord Carhampton again refused to obey.

The King's sign manual was at length procured, ordering him to break up his camps and bring back the garrison; this he obeyed, and marched the troops into Dublin barracks. "He then resigned his command, and publicly declared that some deep and insidious scheme of the Minister was in agitation; for, instead of suppressing, the Irish Government was obviously disposed to excite an insurrection.

"Mr. Pitt counted on the expertness of the Irish Government to effect a premature explosion. Free quarters were now ordered, to irritate the Irish population; *slow tortures* were inflicted under the pretence of forcing confessions; the people were goaded and driven to madness."\*

General Abercrombie, who succeeded as Commander-in-Chief, was not permitted to abate these enormities, and therefore resigned with disgust; but not before deliberately stating, in general orders, that the army placed under his command, from their state of disorganization, would soon be much more formidable to their friends than to their enemies; and that he would not countenance or admit free quarters.

About this time occurred an episode in the history of the United Irishmen—the arrest and trial of Arthur O'Connor, Coigley, and others, in England.

From the time O'Connor became a member of the Leinster

\* Sir Jonah Barrington. *Rise and Fall of the Irish Nation.*

Directory of the Society of the United Irishmen, he was the foremost leader in their affairs. When the United Irishmen solicited the intervention of France in 1796, O'Connor negotiated the treaty with the agent of the French Directory. He and Lord Edward had an interview subsequently with Hoche, and arranged the place of landing, and consequent military operations.

In the early part of 1797, O'Connor had been arrested and committed to the Tower, "vehemently suspected of sundry treasons," rather than charged with any specific crime against the State. After an imprisonment of six months he was liberated. In February, 1798, he came to England, with an intention, as it afterwards appeared, of proceeding to France, in conjunction with John Binns, member of the London Corresponding Society, James Coigley, an Irish priest, and a person of the name of Allen. In the latter end of February they went to Margate, intending to hire a small vessel to convey them to France. Some circumstances in their conduct, however, exciting suspicion, they were all apprehended, and first committed prisoners to the Tower, and afterwards to Maidstone Jail. At Maidstone they were tried by a special commission on the 21st and 22nd of May, and all of them acquitted, except Coigley, on whom had been found a paper, purporting to be an address from "the Secret Committee of England to the Executive Directory of France." Coigley was condemned and executed; and Mr. O'Connor and Binns, after their acquittal, were detained on another charge of treason preferred against them. In the meantime, and in consequence of the motion of Mr. O'Donnell, an Act had passed the Irish Parliament, authorizing grand juries to present any newspaper containing seditious or libellous matter as a nuisance; and also authorizing the magistrates, on such presentation, to suppress the paper, and seize and destroy the printing materials, &c. The paper called *The Press* was, therefore, suppressed, and some of its principal supporters taken into custody; but no discovery of importance resulted from this transaction.

During the first three months of 1798 the outrages committed by the magistrates, with the aid of the troops and yeomanry, upon the simple and defenceless people of Leinster, became fearful and notorious. But, painful as must be the details of a slow and uniform agony of a whole people, there can be no history of Ireland in which such details do not hold a conspicuous place. As a perfectly authentic historical document, the speech of the Earl of Moira, in the British House of Peers (not one statement of which has ever been contradicted), may be taken as a sufficient picture of the state of the country, even as early as the November



of 1797. Here follows an extract :—"My Lords, I have seen in Ireland the most absurd, as well as the most disgusting tyranny, that any nation ever groaned under. I have been myself a witness of it in many instances; I have seen it practiced and unchecked; and the effects that have resulted from it have been such, as I have stated to your Lordships. I have said that, if such a tyranny be persevered in, the consequence must inevitably be the deepest and most universal discontent, and even hatred to the English name. I have seen in that country a marked distinction made between the English and Irish. I have seen troops that have been sent full of this prejudice—that every inhabitant in that kingdom is a rebel to the British Government. I have seen the most wanton insults practiced upon men of all ranks and conditions. I have seen the most grievous oppressions exercised, in consequence of a presumption that the person who was the unfortunate object of such oppression was in hostility to the Government; and yet that has been done in a part of the country as quiet and as free from disturbance as the city of London. Who states these things, my Lords, should, I know, be prepared with proofs. I am prepared with them. Many of the circumstances I know of my own knowledge; others I have received from such channels as will not permit me to hesitate one moment in giving credit to them.

"His Lordship then observed that, from education and early habits, the *curfew* was ever considered by Britons as a badge of slavery and oppression. It then was practiced in Ireland with brutal rigour. He had known an instance where a master of a house had in vain pleaded to be allowed the use of a candle to enable the mother to administer relief to her daughter struggling in convulsive fits. In former times, it had been the custom for Englishmen to hold the infamous proceedings of the inquisition in detestation. One of the greatest horrors with which it was attended was that the person, ignorant of the crime laid to his charge, or of his accuser, was torn from his family, immured in a prison, and in the most cruel uncertainty as to the period of his confinement, or the fate which awaited him. To this injustice, abhorred by Protestants in the practice of the inquisition, were the people of Ireland exposed. All confidence, all security were taken away. In alluding to the inquisition he had omitted to mention one of its characteristic features. If the supposed culprit refused to acknowledge the crime with which he was charged he was put to the rack, to extort confession of whatever crime was alleged against him by the pressure of torture. The same proceedings had been introduced in Ireland. When a man was

taken up on suspicion he was put to the torture ; nay, if he were merely accused of concealing the guilt of another. The rack, indeed, was not at hand ; but the punishment of picqueting was in practice, which had been for some years abolished, as too inhuman even in the dragoon service. He had known a man, in order to extort confession of a supposed crime, or of that of some of his neighbours, picqueted till he actually fainted—picqueted a second time till he fainted again, and, as soon as he came to himself, picqueted a third time till he once more fainted ; and all upon mere suspicion ! Nor was this the only species of torture. Men had been taken and hung up till they were half dead, and then threatened with a repetition of the cruel treatment unless they made confession of the imputed guilt. These were not particular acts of cruelty, exercised by men abusing the power committed to them, but they formed a part of our system. They were notorious, and no person could say who would be the next victim of this oppression and cruelty, which he saw others endure. This, however, was not all ; their Lordships, no doubt, would recollect the famous proclamation issued by a military commander in Ireland, requiring the people to give up their arms. It never was denied that this proclamation was illegal, though defended on some supposed necessity ; but it was not surprising that some reluctance had been shown to comply with it by men who conceived the Constitution gave them a right to keep arms in their houses for their own defence ; and they could not but feel indignation in being called upon to give up their right. In the execution of the order the greatest cruelties had been committed. If any one was suspected to have concealed weapons of defence, his house, his furniture, and all his property was burnt ; but this was not all. If it were supposed that any district had not surrendered all the arms which it contained, a party was sent out to collect the number at which it was rated ; and, in the execution of this order, thirty houses were sometimes burnt down in a single night. Officers took upon themselves to decide discretionally the quantity of arms ; and upon their opinions these fatal consequences followed. Many such cases might be enumerated ; but, from prudential motives, he wished to draw a veil over more aggravated facts which he could have stated, and which he was willing to attest before the Privy Council, or at their Lordships' bar. These facts were well-known in Ireland, but they could not be made public through the channel of the newspapers, for fear of that summary mode of punishment which had been practiced towards the *Northern Star*, when a party of troops in open day, and in a town where the General's headquarters were, went and destroyed

all the offices and property belonging to that paper. It was thus authenticated accounts were suppressed."

The same system of horrors had proceeded, with aggravations of brutality, from November, 1797; and it was in vain that any patriotic Irishman, who still attended Parliament, attempted, from time to time, to procure some kind of inquiry into the necessity for all this. Both Houses of Parliament were entirely in the hands of the Castle; and Clare and Castlereagh bore down all such efforts by the most insolent audacity of assertion.

On the 5th of March, Sir Lawrence Parsons, after a long and interesting speech, made a motion that a committee should be appointed to inquire into the state of the country, and to suggest such measures as were likely to conciliate the popular mind. Lord Caulfield, in a maiden speech of much ability, seconded the motion. Lord Castlereagh, with whom the majority of the House went, vehemently opposed it. He entered into a history of the country for some years back, and concluded from the events that the United Irishmen were not men who would be contented or conciliated by any measures of concession short of a separation from England, and fraternity with the French Republic; that they were in open rebellion, and, therefore, only to be met by force. He reasoned also to prove that the coercive measures of the Government had been *the consequences, not the causes of the discontents*; that the excesses charged on the soldiery were naturally to be expected from the state of things, though he did not cease to lament them; and he also contended that where excesses had taken place the laws were open, and able to punish them.

This last assertion of his Lordship, about the law, was well-known by every man who heard him to be simply false; but not more false than his assertion that military outrages were the consequences, not the cause, of the existing troubles. But being sure of an immense majority at his back, he could say what he pleased. The resolution offered by Sir Lawrence Parsons was negatived by an immense majority.

It was the same case in the House of Lords. Lord Moira, after vainly trying to make an impression on the peers of England, came over to make a last effort with those of Ireland. He made a speech very similar to that which he had made at Westminster, and reciting the same facts; ending with a motion for an address to the Viceroy. Lord Clare, the Chancellor, replied in the same tone of cool and dashing insolence which had now become the settled and preconcerted style of debate with the partisans of the Castle.

The Lord Chancellor, after paying a just compliment to the



character of the noble earl, attributed to his residence out of his own country his ignorance of it. "He asserted, that the system of Government *had been a system of conciliation*; that in no place had the experiment been so fairly tried as in Ireland; in none had it so completely failed."

Lord Moira's motion was also negatived, of course; and it was evident that, so far as Parliament was concerned, the people were to be delivered over without reprieve to the picketings of the soldiery and the knotted scourges of the yeoman.

Some degree of colour began at last to be given to the constant statements of Lord Castlereagh—that the country was in open rebellion; for in the months of February and March, there were several tumultuous assemblages at night; their object was to search for arms; and assuredly no people ever stood in more deadly need of arms than the Irish people then did. On one day in March, a party of mounted men even entered the little town of Cahir, County of Tipperary, in the open day, and took away all the arms they could find there. They appear to have gone as they came, without committing any violence or outrage.\* Still there was not that general insurrectionary movement for which Mr. Pitt was waiting; and it was now, therefore, resolved to give another turn to the screw of coercion. It was in the month of April that Sir Ralph Abercrombie, after two or three months' experience of his command, when he found that the army was expected to be used to goad the people to despair, while habits of marauding and "free quarters" were fast destroying the discipline of the troops themselves, resigned his post as Commander-in-Chief. His resignation was undoubtedly caused, as Lord Carhampton's had been, by his discovery that he was expected to act, not for the repression of rebellion, but in order to excite it. Of course, his military habits and principles would not permit him to say as much, nor to hint at any fault on the part of the Lord Lieutenant; yet the first paragraph of his famous "General Order" was at once seen to be so wholly at variance with the plans and policy of the Government, that there was nothing left for Sir Ralph but to resign, and seek some more honourable employment for his sword. The General Order is as follows:—

\* Plowden, *Hist. Review*. This writer, indeed, alleges that the peasants in those two months "committed many murders;" but though a Catholic writer, his well-known political principles make him always too ready to charge crimes, on very doubtful evidence, upon all Catholics who were not "loyal" to the King of England. He does not particularise any of these "many murders;" and it may, therefore, be fairly doubted that there were any murders, except, perhaps, of an occasional tithe-proctor.

“ADJUTANT-GENERAL’S OFFICE, DUBLIN,  
February 26th, 1798.

[“*General Order.*”]

“The very disgraceful frequency of courts-martial, and the many complaints of the conduct of the troops in this kingdom, having too unfortunately proved the army to be in a state of licentiousness, which must render it formidable to every one but the enemy; the Commander-in-Chief thinks it necessary to demand from all generals commanding districts and brigades, as well as commanding officers of regiments, that they exert themselves, and compel, from all officers under their command, the strictest and most unremitting attention to the discipline, good order, and conduct of their men; such as may restore the high and distinguished reputation the British troops have been accustomed to enjoy in every part of the world. It becomes necessary to recur, and most pointedly to attend to the standing orders of the kingdom, which at the same time that they direct military assistance to be given at the requisition of the civil magistrate, positively forbid the troops to act (but in case of attack) without his presence and authority; and the most clear and precise orders are to be given to the officer commanding the party for this purpose.

“The utmost prudence and precaution are also to be used in granting parties to revenue officers, with respect to the person requiring such assistance and those employed on the duty; whenever a guard is mounted, patrols must be frequently out to take up any soldier who may be found out of his quarters after his hours.

“A very culpable remissness having also appeared on the part of officers respecting the necessary inspection of barracks, quarters, messes, &c., as well as attendance at roll-calls, and other hours; commanding officers must enforce the attention of those under their command to those points, and the general regulations; for all which the strictest responsibility will be expected from them.

“It is of the utmost importance that the discipline of the dragoon regiments should be minutely attended to, for the facilitating of which the Commander-in-Chief has dispensed with the attendance of orderly dragoons on himself, and desires that they may not be employed by any general or commanding officers but on military and indispensable business.

“G. HEWIT,

“Lieut.-Gen. Craig,

“Adjutant-General.

“*Eastern District Barracks, Dublin.*”

The resignation of Sir Ralph Abercrombie was immediately followed by the departure of Mr. Secretary Pelham ; who, as Mr. Plowden alleges, also disapproved of the new plan of "prematurely exploding the rebellion" by the simple machinery of goading the people to despair. It is notorious, that in Ireland, the active Minister upon whom the odium or merit of the Government measures personally fell, was the first Secretary of the Lord Lieutenant. Through his mouth did his Excellency speak to the House of Commons ; from him did the nation expect the reason, and upon him chiefly rested the responsibility of the Government measures in the belief of the public. His sentiments were, of course, concluded to be in perfect unison with the Lord Lieutenant, as his voice was the organ of his Excellency. It appears that Mr. Pelham, however earnest and firm he had been in opposing Catholic Emancipation and Parliamentary Reform, which two questions Earl Camden had avowedly been sent to oppose, was very far from approving the harsh and sanguinary means of dragooning the people which had been for some time practiced, and were intended to be persevered in.\* He resolved, therefore, to retire from a situation in which he was under the necessity of giving official countenance and

\* We do not desire to use stronger language than the facts will warrant, nor to advance, without sufficient authority, against any government so atrocious a charge as that of resolving to goad a people into insurrection, in order to make a pretext for slaughtering them first, and depriving their country of its national existence afterwards. This system at this time, viz., 5th April, 1798, Mr. Grattan has thus described :—"Here we perceive and lament the effects of inveteracy, conceived by his Majesty's Ministers against the Irish. 'Irritable and quellable, devoted to superstition, deaf to law, and hostile to property,' such was the picture, which at different times his Ministers in Ireland have painted of his people, with a latent view to flatter the English by the degradation of the Irish, and by such sycophantship and malice, they have persuaded themselves to consider their fellow-subjects as a different species of human creature, fair objects of religious proscription and political incapacities, but not of moral relationship, or moral obligation ; accordingly, they have afforded indemnity for the rich, and new pains and penalties for the people ; they have given felonious descriptions of his Majesty's subjects, and have easily persuaded themselves to exercise felonious practices against their lives and properties : they have become as barbarous as their system, and as savage as their own description of their countrymen and their equals ; and now it seems they have communicated to the British Minister, at once, their deleterious maxims and their foul expressions, and he too indulges and waxes in villainous discourses against the people of Ireland, sounding the horrid trumpet of carnage and separation. Thus the language of the Ministers becomes an encouragement to the army to murder the Irish.

"We leave these scenes, they are dreadful ; a Ministry in league with the abettors of the Orange Boys and at war with the people ; a people unable to procure a hearing in either country, while the loquacity of their enemies besieges the throne."



support to a system, which in principle he abhorred, and which he knew to have been extorted from the Chief Governor, whose immediate and responsible agent he was before the public. The last time he spoke in public was on Sir Lawrence Parsons' motion, which he opposed in a manner that evidently betrayed the uneasiness of his own situation. Mr. Pelham, however, did not resign. Indeed, Sir Jonah Barrington, and other authorities, affirm that he only went to England on account of ill-health. At any rate, his successor in active duty (but only at first as *locum tenens*) was Lord Castlereagh—afterwards Lord Londonderry—perhaps the ablest, and certainly the worst, man who ever “did the King's business” in Ireland. He was not gazetted as Secretary till the next year.

General Lake was placed provisionally in command of the forces; and the way was now open for the full development of the bloody conspiracy of the Government against the people. There was now concentrated in Ireland a force of at least 130,000 men, including regular troops, English and Scottish fencible regiments and Irish Militia. But even this was not enough. On the 23rd of April, the new Secretary announced to the House of Commons that two regiments of “foreign troops” had been ordered to Ireland. These were the Hessians, German mercenaries from Hesse Darmstadt and Hesse Cassel, who had been for some time favourite instruments of the British Government for dragooning any refractory population.

On the 30th of March the whole country was placed under martial law by proclamation. It was the first time that the County of Wexford had been proclaimed under the “Insurrection Act,” and “from that moment,” says Miles Byrne, “every one considered himself walking on a mine, ready to be blown up; and all sighed for orders to begin.” Orders were at once issued from the Castle that the military should proceed at their own absolute discretion in all measures which any officer should judge needful for suppressing that rebellion which did not yet exist, but which it was fully determined should immediately break out. A favourite measure of Lord Castlereagh was the system of “free quarters.” His lordship knew thoroughly the people of his country; and was aware that nothing could so certainly and promptly goad them into desperate resistance as the quartering of an insolent and licentious soldiery in their houses and amongst their families. “Free quarters,” therefore, were at once ordered; the magistrates of the “Ascendancy” were at the same time assured that whatever they should think fit to do against the people should be considered well done. They had already (by the “In-

demnity Act") *carte blanche*, at any rate; and now, under the new impulsion given by the new Secretary, they vied with one another in atrocity. In the Counties of Kildare, Meath, Dublin, Carlow, Wicklow, and Wexford, the horrors of this oppression were especially grievous. The good Miles Byrne, every word of whose narration is thoroughly worthy of implicit trust, says:—"The military placed on free quarters with the inhabitants were mostly furnished by the Ancient Britons; a cruel regiment, which became obnoxious from the many outrages they committed wherever they were stationed; being quartered in houses where the men had to absent themselves, the unfortunate females who remained had to suffer all sorts of brutality from these ferocious monsters. What hardships, what calamities and miseries had not the wretched people to suffer, on whom were let loose such a body of soldiery as were then in Ireland!"

This gallant old Miles Byrne, writing from his notes sixty years afterwards (he was but eighteen years old in 1798), thus details some few of the scenes which passed in his county, and within his own knowledge:—

"Many of the low-bred magistrates availed themselves of the martial law, to prove their vast devotion to Government, by persecuting, and often torturing, the inoffensive country people, Archibald Hamilton Jacob and the Enniscorthy yeomen cavalry never marched out of the town without being accompanied by a regular executioner, with his ropes, cat o' nine tails, &c.

"Hawtry White, Solomon Richards, and a Protestant minister of the name of Owens, were all notorious for their cruelty and persecuting spirit; the latter particularly so, putting on pitch caps, and exercising other torments. To the credit of some of his victims, when the vile fellow himself was in their power, and was brought a prisoner to the insurgent camp at Gorey, they sought no other revenge than that of putting a pitch cap on him. I had often difficulty in preventing the others, who had suffered so much at his hands, from tearing him to pieces. He, in the end, escaped, with many other prisoners, being escorted and guarded by men who did not consider that revenge, or retaliation of any kind, would forward the sacred cause they were embarked in; particularly, as they were desirous it should not be thought that it was a religious war they were engaged in. Although several of the principal chiefs of the United Irishmen were Protestants, the Orange magistrates did all they could to spread the belief, that the Catholics had no other object in view but to kill their Protestant fellow-subjects, and to give weight to this opinion, they did what they could to provoke the unfortunate people to

commit outrages and reprisals, by killing some and burning their houses.

“In short, the state of the country previous to the insurrection, is not to be imagined ; except by those who witnessed the atrocities of every description committed by the military and the Orangemen, who were let loose on the unfortunate, defenceless population.

“The infamous Hunter Gowan\* now sighed for an opportunity to vent his ferocious propensity of murdering his Catholic neighbours in cold blood. When the yeomanry corps was first formed, he was not considered sufficiently respectable to be charged with the command of one ; but in consequence of the proclamation of martial law, he soon obtained a commission of the peace and was created a captain, and was commissioned to raise a cavalry corps ; in a short time he succeeded in getting about thirty or forty low Orangemen, badly mounted ; but they soon procured better horses, at the expense of the unfortunate farmers, who were plundered without redress. This corps went by the name of the black mob ; their first campaign was, to arrest all the Catholic blacksmiths, and to burn their houses. Poor William Butter, James Haydon, and Dalton, smiths whom we employed to shoe our horses and do other work, for many years before, were condemned to be transported, according to the recent law enacted, that magistrates upon their own authority could sentence to transportation. But the monster, Hunter Gowan, thinking this kind of punishment too slight, wished to give his young men an opportunity to prove they were staunch blood-hounds. Poor Garrett Fennell, who had just landed from England, and was on his way to see his father and family, was met by this corps, and tied by his two hands up to a tree ; they then stood at a certain distance and each man lodged the contents of his carabine in the body of poor Fennell, at their captain’s command.

“They then went to a house close by, where they shot James Darcy, a poor inoffensive man, the father of five children. The bodies of these two murdered victims were waked that night in the chapel of Monaseed, where the unhappy women and children assembled to lament their slaughtered relatives. This chapel was afterwards burned. Poor Fennell left a young widow and two

\* This Hunter Gowan had been horsewhipped by one of the Byrnes, old Garrett Byrne, of Ballymanus. Miles Byrne says :—“Gowan took the law of Garrett Byrne, and ran him into great expense.” He soon, however, found out even a more effectual method of having his revenge upon the Byrnes.



children. This cruel deed took place on the road between our house and the chapel. The day after, the 25th of May, 1798, distant about three miles from our place, one of the most bloody deeds took place that was ever recorded in Irish history since the days of Cromwell. Twenty-eight fathers of families, prisoners, were shot and massacred in the Ball Alley of Carnew, without trial. Mr. Cope, the Protestant minister, was one of the principal magistrates who presided at this execution. I knew several of the murdered men; particularly, Pat Murphy, of Knockbrandon, at whose wedding I was two years before; he was a brave and most worthy man, and much esteemed. William Young, a Protestant, was amongst the slaughtered.

"At Dunlavin, County of Wicklow, previous to the rising, thirty-four men were shot without any trial; officers, to their disgrace, presiding and sanctioning these proceedings. But it is useless to enumerate or continue the list of cruelties perpetrated; it will suffice to say, that where the military were placed on free quarters, and where all kinds of crime were committed, the people were not worse off than those living where no soldiers were quartered; for in the latter instance, the inhabitants were generally called to their doors, and shot without ceremony; their houses being immediately burned or plundered.

"This was the miserable state our part of the country was in at the beginning of May, 1798. All were obliged to quit their houses and hide themselves the best way they could. Ned Feunell, Nicholas Murphy and I, agreed, the last time we met, previous to the insurrection, that through the means of our female friends, we should do everything in our power to keep the people from desponding, for we had every reason to hope, that ere long, there would be orders received for a general rising from the Directory. We also promised to endeavour to get news from Dublin, if possible, and at least from Arklow, through Phil Neill and young Garrett Graham, of that town, both of them very active and well-known to the principal men in Dublin, and through them and Anthony Perry, we expected shortly to receive instructions for what was best to be done, under the critical circumstances in which we were placed. I was daily in hopes of getting some information from my step-brother Kennedy (at Dublin), and on this account I remained as long as I could in the neighbourhood of our place, keeping away, however, from my mother's house; sleeping at night in the fields, watching in the day time from the hills and high grounds, to see if the military or yeomen were approaching."

It was a needful part of the general plan of Government to

extend and encourage the Orange societies, and to exasperate them against their Catholic neighbours. Of the precise connection between the Castle and the Orange lodges, it is not, of course, easy to ascertain the precise terms and extent. It is, however, notorious, that while the Irish and English Government has always professed to disapprove the sanguinary principles of the Orangemen, they have always relied upon that body in seasons of threatened revolt, as a willing force to crush the mass of the people; and that even so late as 1848, arms were secretly issued to the lodges from Dublin Castle. We have already seen Mr. Grattan's distinct assertion that "the Ministry was in league with the abettors of the Orange Boys, and at war with the people." In the examination of Mr. Arthur O'Connor before the Secret Committee, we find O'Connor describing the proceedings of the Government in these terms:—

"Finding how necessary it was to have some part of the population on their side, they had recourse to the old religious feuds, and set an organization of Protestants, whose fanaticism would not permit them to see they were enlisted under the banners of religion, to fight for a political usurpation they abhorred. No doubt, by these means you have gained a temporary aid, but by destroying the organization of the Union, and exasperating the great body of the people, you will one day pay dearly for the aid you have derived from this temporary shift.

"*Committee.*—Government had nothing to do with the Orange system, *nor their extermination.*

"*O'Connor.*—You, my lord (Castlereagh), from the station you fill, must be sensible that the executive of any country has in its power to collect a vast mass of information, and you must know from the secret nature, and the zeal of the Union, that its executive must have the most minute information of every act of of the Irish Government. As one of the executive it came to my knowledge, that considerable sums of money were expended throughout the nation in endeavouring to extend the Orange system, and that the oath of extermination was administered. When these facts are coupled, not only with general impunity, which has been uniformly extended towards the acts of this infernal association, but the marked encouragement its members have received from Government, I find it impossible to exculpate the Government from being the parent and protector of these *sworn extirpators.*"

In common fairness, we must give the Orange body the benefit of whatever credit can possibly be accorded to their own denial of their alleged oath of extermination. Early in this year, while

the Government was scourging the people into revolt, certain Grand Masters of the Orangemen met in Dublin, and published the following document:—

*“To the Loyal Subjects of Ireland:—*

“From the various attempts that have been made to poison the public mind, and slander those who have had the spirit to adhere to their King and Constitution, and to maintain the laws.

“We, the Protestants of Dublin, assuming the name of Orangemen, feel ourselves called upon, not to vindicate our principles, for we know that our honour and loyalty bid defiance to the shafts of malevolence and disaffection, but openly to disavow these principles and declare to the world the objects of our institution.

“We have long observed with indignation, the efforts that have been made to foment rebellion in this kingdom, by the seditious, who have formed themselves into societies under the specious name of United Irishmen.

“We have seen with pain the lower orders of our fellow-subjects forced or seduced from their allegiance, by the threats and machinations of traitors.

“And we have viewed with horror the successful exertions of miscreants to encourage a foreign enemy to invade this happy land, in hopes of rising into consequence, on the downfall of their country.

“We, therefore, thought it high time to rally round the Constitution, and pledge ourselves to each other to maintain the laws and support our good King against all his enemies, whether rebels to their God or to their country, and by so doing, show to the world that there is a body of men in this island who are ready in the hour of danger to stand forward in the defence of that grand paladium of our liberty, the Constitution of Great Britain and Ireland, obtained and established by the courage and loyalty of our ancestors, under the great King William.

“Fellow-subjects, we are accused of being an institution founded on principles too shocking to repeat, and bound together by oaths at which human nature would shudder; but we caution you not to be led away by such malevolent falsehoods, for we solemnly assure you, in the presence of the Almighty God, *that the idea of injuring any one on account of his religious opinions never entered into our hearts!* We regard every loyal subject as our friend, be his religion what it may, we have no enmity but to the enemies of our country.

“We further declare, that we are ready at all times to submit ourselves to the orders of those in authority under His Majesty, and that we will cheerfully undertake any duty which they



should think proper to point out for us, in case either a foreign enemy shall dare to invade our coasts, or that a domestic foe should presume to raise the standard of rebellion in the land ; to these principles we are pledged, and in support of them we are ready to shed the last drop our blood.

Signed by order of the several lodges in Dublin, for selves and other Masters :—

“ THOMAS VERNER,

“ EDWARD BALL,

“ JOHN CLAUDIUS BERESFORD,

“ WILLIAM JAMES,

“ ISAAC DEJONCOURT.”

The credit which can be given to this profession of principles is much diminished, or reduced to nothing, by the fact already recorded, that immediately on the establishment of the first Orange Lodges in Armagh County (the first of the above addressers being the founder and first Grand Master), the members of those lodges did forthwith set themselves to the task of extirpating all their Catholic neighbours ; solely because they were Catholics ; and that in one year they had slain or driven from their homes fourteen hundred *families*, or seven thousand individuals.

It is further notorious that the Orange yeomanry serving in Leinster, were amongst the most furious and savage torturers of the people.

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## CHAPTER XXXIII.

1798.

THE Government was now preparing its master-stroke, which was both to cause a premature explosion of the insurrection, and to deprive the people at one blow of their leaders, both civil and military. There existed, unfortunately, at that period, one Thomas Reynolds, a silk mercer of Dublin, who had purchased an estate in the County of Kildare, called Kilkea Castle, and from the fortune he had acquired, commanded considerable influence with his Catholic brethren. Lord Edward Fitzgerald and Oliver Bond, two leaders in the conspiracy, having, for these reasons, considered him a proper person to assist in forwarding their revolutionary designs, easily attached him to their cause ; and having succeeded, he was soon after sworn an United Irishman, at the house of Oliver Bond, in Dublin ; in the year 1797, he accepted the commission of colonel, the offices of treasurer and representative of the County of Kildare, and at last that of delegate for the province of Leinster. He had money dealings about

a mortgage of some lands at Castle Jordan with a Mr. Cope, a Dublin merchant, who having lamented to him, in the course of conversation, the undoubted symptoms of an approaching rebellion, Mr. Reynolds said that he knew a person connected with the United Irishmen, who, he believed, would defeat their nefarious projects, by communicating them to Government, in order to make an atonement for the crime he had committed in joining them. Mr. Cope assured him that such a person would obtain the highest honours and pecuniary rewards that administration could confer. In short, after making his conditions, and receiving in hand five hundred guineas as a first payment on account, he told Mr. Cope that the Leinster delegates were to meet at Oliver Bond's on the 12th of March, to concert measures for an insurrection which was shortly to take place, but did not at that time acknowledge that the information came directly from him, but insinuated that it was imparted by a third person.

In consequence of this, Justice Swan, attended by twelve sergeants in coloured clothes, arrested the Leinster delegates, thirteen in number, while sitting in council in the house of Oliver Bond, in Bridge-street, on the 12th of March, 1798, and seized several of their papers, which led to the discovery of all their plans; and on the same day Messrs. Emmet, MacNeven, Bond, Sweetman, Henry Jackson, and Hugh Jackson were arrested and taken into custody; and warrants were granted against Lord Edward Fitzgerald and Messrs. McCormick and Sampson, who having notice thereof, made their escape.\*

The leaders did not intend to make an insurrection till the French came to their assistance; and they meant in the meantime to continue to increase their numbers, and to add to their stock of arms.

On the removal of so many valuable leaders everything was done that could be done to repair the loss, and to keep the United Irishmen quiet; for it was now very well understood that the design of the Government was to provoke a premature explosion. The two brothers Sheares, Henry and John, both barristers, and gentlemen of high character and excellent education, took charge of the government of the Leinster Societies. A handbill was immediately circulated, to keep up the spirits of the people, cautioning them against being either "goaded into untimely violence

\* A few days after these arrests there was a meeting of the Provincial Committee at the "Brazen Head Hotel." It was there proposed, by a man named Reynolds, a distant relative of the traitor, that Thomas Reynolds should be put out of the way—that is, assassinated. The proposal was rejected unanimously. *Madden, 1st Series.*

or sunk into pusillanimous despondency." The handbill concluded thus :—"Be firm, Irishmen; but be cool and cautious. Be patient yet awhile. Trust to no unauthorized communication; and above all, we warn you—again and again we warn you—against doing the work of your tyrants by premature, by partial or divided exertion. If Ireland shall be forced to throw away the scabbard, let it be at her own time, not theirs."

But Lords Camden, Clare, and Castlereagh were determined that it should be at *their* time. Universal military executions and "free quarters" were at once proclaimed all over the country.

It is difficult to detail with due historic coolness the horrors which followed the proclamation of the 30th of March; nor can we wonder that Dr. Madden expresses himself thus upon the occasion :—"The rebellion did not break out till May, 1798, and, to use the memorable words of Lord Castlereagh, even then 'measures were taken by Government to cause its premature explosion;' words which include the craft, cruelty, and cold-blooded, deliberate wickedness of the politics of a Machiavelli, the principles of a Thug, and the perverted tastes and feelings of a eunuch in the exercise of power and authority, displayed in acts of sly malignity and stealthy, vindictive turpitude, perpetrated on pretence of serving purposes of State."

Besides, Lord Castlereagh, if he was really the chief adviser of those measures to cause a premature explosion, was not the only person who approved of them. The same Secret Committee whose report is so often cited, states, "that it appears, from a variety of evidence laid before your committee, that the rebellion would not have broken out as soon as it did had it not been for the *well-timed measures* adopted by Government subsequent to the proclamation of the Lord Lieutenant and Council, bearing date 30th March, 1798." It is necessary to ascertain what these well-timed measures were. On the examination of the State prisoners before this committee in August, 1798, the Lord Chancellor put the following question to Mr. Emmet :—"Pray, Mr. Emmet, what caused the late insurrection?" To which Mr. Emmet replied :—"The free quarters, house-burnings, tortures, and the military executions in the counties of Kildare, Carlow, and Wicklow!" Messrs. MacNeven and O'Connor gave similar replies to the same query.

However that may be, it remains now to give something like a connected narrative of what was actually done, and how the premature explosion did burst out.\*

\* The authorities for this period are numerous—Sir Richard Musgrave,



The proclamation, which was published on the 30th of March, declared that a traitorous conspiracy, existing within the kingdom for the destruction of the established Government, had been considerably extended, and had manifested itself in acts of open violence and rebellion; and that, in consequence thereof, the most direct and positive orders had been issued to the officers commanding his Majesty's forces to employ them with the utmost vigour and decision for the immediate suppression of that conspiracy, and for the disarming of the rebels and all disaffected persons, by the most summary and effectual measures. To Sir Ralph Abercrombie, then chief commander of the Forces, orders were issued from the Lord Lieutenant to proceed with his army into the disturbed counties, vested with full powers to act according to his discretion for the attainment of the proposed object. A manifesto, dated from his headquarters at Kildare, the 3rd of April, was addressed to the inhabitants of the county by the General, requiring them to surrender their arms in the space of ten days from the date of the notice, threatening, in case of non-compliance, to distribute large bodies of troops among them to live at free quarters—promising rewards to such as would give information of concealed arms or ammunition—and announcing his resolution of recurring to other severities if the county should still continue in a disturbed state.

On the advance of the military into each county, the same notice was given to its inhabitants, and at the expiration of the term prescribed, the troops were quartered on the houses of the disaffected *or suspected*, in numbers proportioned to the supposed guilt and ability of the owners, whose pecuniary circumstances were often deeply injured by the maintenance of the soldiery, and the waste which was otherwise made of their effects. Numbers of houses, with their furniture, were burned, in which concealed arms had been found, in which meetings of the Union had been holden, or whose occupants had been guilty of the fabrication of pikes, or had been suspected of other practices for the promotion of the conspiracy. Numbers were daily scourged, picqueted, or otherwise put to pain, to *force confessions* of concealed arms or plots. Outrageous acts of severity were often committed by persons not in the regular troops—some from an unfeigned and others from an affected zeal for the service of the Crown. These various vexations amounted on the whole to such a mass of dis-

Hay, Gordon, Miles Byrne, &c.—for County Wexford. In the text, we adopt in the main the narrative of Plowden, checking it where needful by the documents assembled together by Madden, Lord Camden's despatches, &c.

quietude and distress that the exhortations of the chiefs to bear their evils with steady patience, until an opportunity of successful insurrection should occur, proved vain with the lower classes.

To authorize the burning of houses and furniture, the wisdom of administration may have seen as good reason as for other acts of severity, though to many that reason was not clear. These burnings, doubtless, caused no small terror and consternation to the disaffected; but they caused also a loss to the community at large, rendered many quite desperate who were deprived of their all, augmented the violence of hatred in those among whom those houseless people took refuge. Men imprisoned on suspicion, or private information, were sometimes half hanged, or strangled almost to death, before their guilt or innocence could be ascertained by trial. Reflecting loyalists were much concerned at the permission or impunity of such acts, which tended strongly to confirm the prejudices already so laboriously excited by the emissaries of revolution.

Among the causes which, in the troubled interval of time previous to the grand insurrection, contributed to the general uneasiness, were the insults practised by pretended zealots, to the annoyance of the truest loyalists as well as malcontents, on persons who wore their hair short, or happened to have any part of their apparel of a green colour, both of which were considered as emblems of republican or of a revolutionary spirit. The term *Croppy* was adopted to signify a revolutionist, or an enemy to the established government. Persons of malevolent minds took advantage of these circumstances to indulge their general malignity or private malice, when they could with impunity. On the heads of many, who were selected as objects of outrage, were fixed by these pretended loyalists caps of coarse linen or strong brown paper, smeared with pitch on the inside, which in some instances adhered so firmly as not to be disengaged without a laceration of the hair, and even skin. On the other side, several of the united party made it a practice to seize violently such as they thought proper or were able, and cropped or cut their hair short, which rendered them liable to the outrage of the pitched cap of those pretended strenuous partisans of the Constitution. Handkerchiefs, ribbons, even a sprig of myrtle and other parts of dress marked with the obnoxious colour, were torn or cut away from females unconscious of disloyalty, and undesignedly bearing the imaginary badge. Various other violent acts were committed, so far as to cut away pieces of men's ears, even sometimes the whole ear, or a part of the nose; nor could the staunchest loyalist be certain always of exemption from insult by being clear of all

imaginary marks of disloyalty; for on the arrival of a detachment of the army in any part of the country where the inhabitants were known to the officers and soldiers, which was almost always the case, private malice was apt to convey in whispers false intelligence, marking individuals, perhaps the best members of society, as proper objects of military outrage, and they suffered accordingly.

By the system of secret accusation and espionage, thus universally adopted, with other extraordinary measures, in this dangerous crisis, Government made ample room for the exertions of private malice. Magistrates and military officers were empowered to receive informations, to keep the names of the informers profoundly secret, and proceed against the accused according to discretion.

One case deserves particular mention, not because of its peculiar atrocity—for there were very many such, but on account of the very singular fact that the perpetrator was afterwards punished by law. It is thus recorded by Mr. Gordon, a Protestant clergyman, in his *History of the Rebellion* :—

“Thomas Fitzgerald, High Sheriff of Tipperary, seized at Clonmel, a gentleman of the name of Wright, against whom no grounds of suspicion could be conjectured by his neighbours, caused five hundred lashes to be inflicted on him in the severest manner, and confined him several days without permitting his wounds to be dressed, so that his recovery from such a state of torture and laceration could hardly be expected. In a trial at law, after the rebellion, on an action of damages brought by Wright against this magistrate, the innocence of the plaintiff appeared so manifest, even at a time when prejudices ran amazingly high against persons accused of disloyalty, that the defendant was condemned to pay five hundred pounds to his prosecutor. Many other actions of damages on similar grounds would have been commenced if the Parliament had not put a stop to such proceedings by an act of indemnity for all errors committed by magistrates from supposed zeal for the public service. A *letter written in the French language*, found in the pocket of Wright, was hastily considered a proof of guilt, though the letter was of a perfectly innocent nature.”

This was the same Fitzgerald whom the good and gallant Sir John Moore saw once in the village of Clogheen engaged in his favourite pursuit. Sir John Moore had the misfortune, like Abercrombie, to hold a command in that army of military execution: and on his march from Fermoy, entering the town of Clogheen, he saw a man tied up and under the lash, while the street itself was



lined with country people on their knees, with their hats off; nor was his disgust repressed when he was informed that the High Sheriff, Mr. Fitzgerald, was making great discoveries, and that he had already flogged the truth out of many respectable persons. His rule was "to flog each person till he told the truth."

The brave Sir John Moore has borne ample testimony to the barbarity of the policy he had witnessed in Ireland pursued by the authorities, and the revenge the Orange gentry and yeomen indulged in upon the poor. In speaking of Wicklow, where Sir John had been chiefly employed, he states his opinion, "that moderate treatment by the generals, and the preventing of the troops from pillaging and molesting the people would soon restore tranquillity, and the latter would certainly be quiet if the gentry and yeomen would only behave with tolerable decency, and not seek to gratify their ill-humour and revenge upon the poor."\*

Major-General William Napier, commenting in the *Edinburgh Review* on the life of Sir John Moore, and the indignation he had always expressed at such atrocious cruelty to the poor people, takes occasion to give his own recollections of the period. He exclaims:—"What manner of soldiers were thus let loose upon the wretched districts which the ascendancy-men *were pleased to call disaffected*? They were men, to use the venerable Abercrombie's words, who were 'formidable to everybody but the enemy.' We ourselves were young at the time; yet, being connected with the army, we were continually amongst the soldiers, listening with boyish eagerness to their conversation, and we well remember—and with horror to this day—the tales of lust, and blood, and pillage—the record of their own actions against the miserable peasantry—which they used to relate." And it is important to remember that all this while there was no insurrection. True, insurrection was intended and longed for; but the people were then neither ready nor inclined to turn out and fight the King's troops. They knew well that they needed a small organized force of regular troops to form a nucleus of an army, and were still waiting and looking out for the French.

In the very midst of the horrible scourging oppression which was thus driving the people to madness, one can derive no pleasure from the fact that Catholic bishops and peers took that very time to testify their loyalty, their attachment to the English throne, and their detestation of rebellion. On the 6th of May, the Lords Fingal, Gormanstown, Southwell, Kenmare, Sir Edward

\* Review in the *Edinburgh Review*, of Life of Sir J. Moore. The reviewer was General Wm. Napier.

Bellew, and forty-one other noblemen, gentlemen, and professors of divinity, including Bishop Hussey, President of Maynooth, published a declaration under their signatures, "with a view," says Mr. Plowden, "of rescuing their body from the imputation of abetting and favouring rebellion and treason." The document was thus addressed:—"To such of the deluded people now in rebellion against his Majesty's Government in this kingdom, as profess the Roman Catholic religion." Those doctors of divinity could vilify rebels very much at their ease; but if one of them had found himself in the position of Father John Murphy, when, on a certain day in this same month of May, returning to his home, he found his house and his humble chapel of Boolavogue smoking in ruins, and his poor parishioners crowding round him in wild affright, not daring to go even to the neighbourhood of their ruined homes, "for fear of being whipped, burned, or exterminated by the Orangemen, hearing of the number of people that were put to death unarmed and unoffending through the country"—one would be curious to know what that doctor of divinity would have done upon such an emergency. Probably very much as Father John did.

A certain Captain Armstrong, an officer of the Kildare militia, a man of some landed property and decent position in society, was the person who now undertook to act the part of Reynolds, and serve as a spy upon the brothers John and Henry Sheares. Armstrong gained access to the confidence, and even intimacy, of the Sheares', not only by his agreeable social qualities, but by his pretended zeal in the cause to which they were devoted. He dined with the two brothers, at their house in Baggot-street, on the 20th of May; the next morning they were both arrested. Doctor Madden says of this transaction:—"Captain Armstrong, in his evidence on the trial of the Sheares, did not think it necessary to state that at his Sunday's interview (May 20th, 1798), he shared the hospitality of his victims; that he dined with them, sat in the company of their aged mother and affectionate sister, enjoyed the society of the accomplished wife of one of them, caressed his infant children, and on another occasion—referred to by Miss Steele—was entertained with music—the wife of the unfortunate man, whose children he was to leave in a few days fatherless, playing on the harp for his entertainment! These things are almost too horrible to think on.

"Armstrong, after dining with his victims on Sunday, returned to their house no more. This was the last time the cloven foot of treachery passed the threshold of the Sheares. On the following morning they were arrested and committed to Kilmainham Jail.

The terrible iniquity of Armstrong's conduct on that Sunday—when he dined with his victims, sat in social intercourse with their families a few hours only before he was aware his treachery would have brought ruin on that household—is unparalleled.”

We may mention here, parenthetically, that Captain Armstrong, after having hanged his hospitable entertainers of Baggot-street, lived himself to a good old age (he died in 1858); but in his interview with Dr. Madden, touching some alleged inaccuracies in the work of the latter, he denied having caressed any children at Sheares'. He said “he never recollected having seen the children at all; but there was a young lady of about fifteen there, whom he met at dinner. The day he dined there (and he dined there only once), he was urged by Lord Castlereagh to do so. It was wrong to do so, and he (Captain Armstrong), was sorry for it; but he was persuaded by Lord Castlereagh to go there to dine, for the purpose of getting further information.”

Perhaps the history of no other country can show us an example of the first minister of State personally exhorting his spies to go to a gentleman's house and mingle with his family in social intercourse, in order to procure evidence to hang him. However, his lordship did procure the information he wanted. He found that the leaders of the United Irishmen, being at length convinced of the impossibility of restraining the people and keeping them quiet under such intolerable tyranny, had decided on a general rising for the 23rd of May.

The whole of the United Irishmen throughout the kingdom, or at least throughout the province of Leinster, were to act at once in concert; and it was their intention to seize the camp of Loughlinstown, the artillery of Chapelizod, and the Castle of Dublin, in one night—the 23rd of May. One hour was to be allowed between seizing the camp of Loughlinstown and the artillery at Chapelizod; and one hour and a half between seizing the artillery and surprising the Castle; and the parties who executed both of the external plans were to enter the City of Dublin at the same moment. The stopping of the mail coaches was to be the signal for the insurgents everywhere to commence their operations. It was also planned that a great insurrection should take place at Cork at the same time. The united men, were, however, at that period, not exactly agreed as to the nature of the insurrection. Mr. Samuel Neilson, with some other of the leaders, were bent upon attacking first the county jail of Kilmainham and the jail of Newgate, in order to set their comrades at liberty; and the project for attacking the latter was also fixed for the 23rd of May, the night of the general insurrection. The Sheares, however, and



others were of a contrary opinion, and they wished to defer the attack on the jails till after the general insurrection had taken place.

Although the Government had been long in possession, through the communications of Reynolds, Armstrong, and other informers, of all the particulars of the conspiracy, they had hitherto permitted or encouraged its progress, in order, as it has been alleged, that the suppression of it might be effected with more *éclat* and terror. As the expected explosion, however, now drew so near, it was found to be necessary to arrest several of the principal leaders, who might give direction, energy, and effect to the insurrection. Lord Edward Fitzgerald had concealed himself since the 12th of March; and, on the 18th of May, Major Sirr having received information that he would pass through Watling-street that night, and be preceded by a chosen band of traitors as an advanced guard, and that he would be accompanied by another, repaired thither, attended by Captain Ryan, Mr. Emerson, of the Attorneys' corps, and a few soldiers in coloured clothes. They met the party which preceded him, and had a skirmish with them on the quay at the end of Watling-street, in which some shots were exchanged; and they took one of them prisoner, who called himself at one time Jameson, at another time Brand.

The arrest of Lord Edward Fitzgerald was effected next day, the 19th of May.

Government having received information that he had arrived in Dublin, and was lodged in the house of one Murphy, a featherman in Thomas-street, sent Major Sirr to arrest him. He, attended by Captain Swan, of the Revenue corps, and Captain Ryan, of the Sepulchre's, and eight soldiers disguised, about five o'clock in the evening repaired in coaches to Murphy's house. While they were posting the soldiers in such a manner as to prevent the possibility of an escape, Captain Swan perceiving a woman running hastily up stairs, for the purpose, as he supposed, of alarming Lord Edward, followed her with the utmost speed, and, on entering an apartment, found Lord Edward lying on a bed, in his dressing jacket. He approached the bed and informed his lordship that he had a warrant against him, and that resistance would be vain; assuring him at the same time that he would treat him with the utmost respect.

Lord Edward sprang from the bed and snapped a pistol, which missed fire, at Captain Swan; he then closed with him, drew a dagger, gave him a wound in the hand, and different wounds in his body; one of them, under the ribs, was deep and dangerous, and bled most copiously.

At that moment, Captain Ryan entered, and missed fire at Lord Edward with a pocket pistol; on which he made a lunge at him with a sword cane, which bent on his ribs, but affected him so much that he threw himself on the bed; and, Captain Ryan having thrown himself on him, a violent scuffle ensued, during which Lord Edward drew a dagger and plunged it into his side. They then fell on the ground, where Captain Ryan received many desperate wounds; one of which, in the lower part of his belly, was so large that his bowels fell out on the floor. Major Sirr, having entered the room, saw Captain Swan bleeding, and Lord Edward advancing towards the door, while Captain Ryan, weltering in blood on the floor, was holding him by one leg and Swan by the other. He, therefore, fired his pistol at Lord Edward, wounding him in the shoulder. His lordship then, quite overpowered, surrendered himself. He was conveyed at once to the Castle. This was two days before the arrest of the Sheares. In their house in Baggot-street was found a rough draft of a proclamation, which seems to have been intended for publication on the morning after taking possession of Dublin. It is violent and vindictive, though not approaching in atrocity to the actual scenes which were then daily enacted under the auspices of Government. Still, having been published by the Government, and being authentic (at least as a rough draft), it forms a part of the history of the times. It is in these words:—

“Irishmen, your country is free, and you are about to be avenged. That vile Government, which has so long and so cruelly oppressed you, is no more. Some of its most atrocious monsters have already paid the forfeit of their lives, and the rest are in our hands. The national flag—the sacred green—is at this moment flying over the ruins of despotism; and that capital, which a few hours past had witnessed the debauchery, the plots, and the crimes of your tyrants, is now the citadel of triumphant patriotism and virtue. Arise then, united sons of Ireland—arise like a great and powerfoul people, to live free, or die. Arm yourselves by every means in your power, and rush like lions on your foes. Consider, that for every enemy you disarm you arm a friend, and thus become doubly powerful. In the cause of liberty, inaction is cowardice, and the coward shall forfeit the property he has not the courage to protect. Let his arms be secured and transferred to those gallant spirits who want and will use them. Yes, Irishmen, we swear by that eternal justice, in whose cause you fight, that the brave patriot who survives the present glorious struggle, and the family of him who has fallen, or hereafter shall fall in it, shall receive from the hands of the grateful nation an ample recom-

pense out of that property which the crimes of our enemies have forfeited into its hands; and his name shall be inscribed on the great national record of Irish revolution, as a glorious example to all posterity; but we likewise swear to punish robbery with death and infamy. We also swear that we will never sheath the sword till every being in the country is restored to those equal rights which the God of nature has given to all men; until an order of things shall be established in which no superiority shall be acknowledged among the citizens of Erin but that of virtue and talents. As for those degenerate wretches who turn their swords against their native country, the national vengeance awaits them. Let them find no quarter, unless they shall prove their repentance by speedily exchanging the standard of slavery for that of freedom, under which their former errors may be buried, and they may share the glory and advantages that are due to the patriot bands of Ireland. Many of the military feel the love of liberty glow within their breasts, and have joined the national standard. Receive with open arms such as shall follow so glorious an example. They can render signal service to the cause of freedom, and shall be rewarded according to their deserts. But, for the wretch who turns his sword against his native country, let the national vengeance be visited on him; let him find no quarter. Two other crimes demand. . . . Rouse all energies of your souls; call forth all the merits and abilities which a vicious Government consigned to obscurity; and, under the conduct of your chosen leaders, march with a steady step to victory. Heed not the glare of hired soldiery, or aristocratic yeomanry; they cannot stand the vigorous shock of freedom. Their trappings and their arms will soon be yours; and the detested Government of England to which we vow eternal hatred, shall learn that the treasures it exhausts on its accoutred slaves, for the purpose of butchering Irishmen, shall but further enable us to turn their swords on its devoted head. Attack them in every direction, by day and by night. Avail yourselves of the natural advantages of your country, which are innumerable, and with which you are better acquainted than they. Where you cannot oppose them in full force, constantly harass their rear and their flanks. Cut off their provisions and magazines, and prevent them as much as possible from uniting their forces. Let whatever moments you cannot devote to fighting for your country be passed in learning how to fight for it, or preparing the means of war; for war, war alone must occupy every mind and every hand in Ireland, until its long-oppressed soil be purged of all its enemies. Vengeance, Irishmen! Vengeance on your oppressors! Remember what thousands of your dearest



friends have perished by their merciless orders. Remember their burnings, their rackings, their torturings, their military massacres, and their legal murders. *Remember Orr!*"

In this proclamation—if it really was intended to be issued as it was drawn up—we have at least the evidence that the United Irishmen were banded together to procure "equal rights for all," and contemplated no oppression of any sect or class of their countrymen. However, such as it was, it must be considered to have been disavowed by other leaders of the United Irishmen, then in prison. In the examination before the Secret Committee of the Lords, as we learn by the memoir of Emmet, MacNeven, and O'Connor, the following examination is found:—

"*Lord Kilwarden*.—You seem averse to insurrection; I suppose it was because you thought it impolitic.

"*Emmet*.—Unquestionably; for if I imagined an insurrection could have succeeded, without a great waste of blood and time, I should have preferred it to invasion, as it would not have exposed us to the chance of contributions being required by a foreign force; but as I did not think so, and as I was certain an invasion would succeed speedily, and without much struggle, I preferred it even at the hazard of that inconvenience, which we took every means to prevent.

"*Lord Dillon*.—Mr. Emmet, you have stated the views of the executive to be very liberal and very enlightened, and I believe yours were so; but let me ask you whether it was not intended to cut off (in the beginning of the contest) the leaders of the opposition party, by a summary mode, such as assassination. My reason for asking you is, John Sheares' proclamation, the most terrible paper that ever appeared in any country. It says that 'many of your tyrants have bled, and others must bleed,' &c.

"*Emmet*.—My lords, as to Mr. Sheares' proclamation, he was not of the executive when I was.

"*Lord Chancellor*.—He was of the new executive.

"*Emmet*.—I do not know he was of any executive, except from what your lordship says; but I believe he was joined with some others in framing a particular plan of insurrection for Dublin and its neighbourhood; neither do I know what value he annexed to those words in his proclamation; but I can answer that, while I was of the executive, there was no such design, but the contrary; for we conceived when one of you lost your lives we lost an hostage. Our intention was to seize you all, and keep you as hostages for the conduct of England; and, after the revolution was over, if you could not live under the new Government, to send you out of the country. I will add one thing more, which,

though it is not an answer to your question, you may have a curiosity to hear. In such a struggle it was natural to expect confiscations. Our intention was, that every wife who had not instigated her husband to resistance should be provided for out of the property, notwithstanding confiscations; and every child who was too young to be his own master, or form his own opinion, was to have a child's portion. Your lordships will now judge how far we intended to be cruel.

*“Lord Chancellor.*—Pray, Mr. Emmet, what caused the late insurrection ?

*“Emmet.*—The free quarters, the house-burnings, the tortures, and the military executions in the Counties of Kildare, Carlow, and Wicklow.

*“Lord Chancellor.*—Don't you think the arrests of the 12th of March caused it ?

*“Emmet.*—No ; but I believe if it had not been for those arrests it would not have taken place ; for the people, irritated by what they suffered, had been long pressing the executive to consent to an insurrection ; but they had resisted or eluded it, and even determined to persevere in the same line. After these arrests, however, other persons came forward, who were irritated, and thought differently, who consented to let that partial insurrection take place.”

On the 21st of May, Lord Castlereagh, by direction of the Lord Lieutenant, wrote to the Lord Mayor of Dublin, to inform him that there was a plan for seizing the city, and recommending precautions. The next day, his lordship presented a message to the House of Commons to the same effect, and a loyal address was presented in reply. Great preparations for defence were now made in Dublin. Various civic bodies armed themselves in haste, and placed themselves at the service of the authorities. Among these was the Lawyers' corps, which showed great zeal on the occasion ; and amongst the members of that body we find the name of a young lawyer who had very lately been called to the bar—Daniel O'Connell.

It was now impossible to prevent the rising. The United Irishmen of Leinster, though thus left without leaders, had got their instructions for action on the 23rd of May ; and, besides, they felt that no reverse of fortune in the open field could be worse than what they were already suffering.

It appears that the plan of attack formed by Lord Edward Fitzgerald had been communicated to most of the insurgents ; for their first open acts of hostility, though apparently fortuitous, irregular, and confused, bore evident marks of a deep-laid

scheme for surprising the military by separate though simultaneous attacks, to surround in a cordon the City of Dublin, and cut off all succours and resources from without. On that day (May 23rd), Mr. Neilson \* and some others of the leaders were arrested ; and the City and County of Dublin were proclaimed by the Lord Lieutenant and Council in a state of insurrection ; the guards at the Castle and all the great objects of attack were trebled ; and, in fact, the whole city was converted into a besieged garrison. Thus the insurgents were unable to effect anything by surprise. Without leaders, and almost without arms or ammunition, they ventured on the bloody contest. Notwithstanding the apparent forwardness of the North, the first commotions appeared in different parts of Leinster. The Northern and Connaught mail coaches were stopped by parties of the insurgents on the night of the 23rd of May ; and, at about twelve o'clock on the morning of the 24th, a large body of insurgents attacked the town and jail of Naas, about fourteen miles from Dublin, where Lord Gosford commanded. As the guard had been seasonably increased, in expectation of such an attack, the assailants were repulsed and driven into a narrow avenue, where, without order or discipline, they sustained for some time the attack of the Armagh militia, and of the fencible corps, raised by Sir Watkin William Wynne, and known by the name of the Ancient Britons. The King's troops lost two officers and about thirty men ; and the insurgents, as was reported, lost 140 in the contest and their flight. They were completely dispersed, and several of them taken prisoners. On the same day, a small division of his Majesty's forces were surprised at the town of Prosperous ; and a detachment at the village of Clane cut their way through to Naas, with considerable loss. About the same time, General Dundas encountered a large body of insurgents on the hills near Kilcullen, and 130 of them were left dead upon the field.

On the following day, a body of about 400 insurgents under the command of two gentlemen of the names of Ledwich and Keough, marched from Rathfarnham, in the neighbourhood of Dublin, along the foot of the mountain towards Belgatt and Clondalkin. In their progress, they were met by a party of

\* Mr. Neilson was seized between nine and ten in the evening, by Gregg, the keeper of Newgate, as he was reconnoitering the prison. A scuffle ensued, and Neilson snapped a pistol at him ; by the intervention of two yeomen he was secured and committed. It is reported, and appears probable, that a large number of the conspirators who were awaiting his orders, having lost their leader, dispersed for that night.



thirty-five dragoons under the command of Lord Roden. After some resistance, the insurgents were defeated, great numbers were killed and wounded, and their leaders—Ledwich and Keough—were taken. They were immediately tried by a court-martial and executed.

Although the first effort of the insurgents had been thus defeated, still they entertained the most sanguine hopes of succeeding in another attempt. General Lake, who, upon the resignation of Sir Ralph Abercrombie, had been appointed Commander-in-Chief, published the following notice on the morning of the 24th of May:—

“Lieutenant-General Lake, commanding his Majesty’s forces in this kingdom, having received from his Excellency the Lord Lieutenant, full powers to put down the rebellion, and to punish rebels in the most summary manner by martial law,” &c.

On the same morning, the Lord Mayor of Dublin issued a proclamation to this effect:—

“Whereas the circumstances of the present crisis demand every possible precaution, these are, therefore, to desire all persons who have registered arms, forthwith to give in (in writing) an exact list or inventory of such arms at the Town Clerk’s office, who will file and enter the same in a book to be kept for that purpose; and all persons who have not registered their arms are hereby required forthwith to deliver up to me, or some other of the magistrates of this city, all arms and ammunition of every kind in their possession; and if, after this proclamation, any person having registered their arms shall be found not to have given in a true list or inventory of such arms; or if any person who has not registered shall be found to have in their power or possession any arms or ammunition whatever, such person or persons will, on such arms being discovered, be forthwith sent on board his Majesty’s navy, as by law directed.

“And I do hereby desire that all housekeepers do place upon the outside of their doors a list of all persons in their respective houses, distinguishing such as are strangers from those who actually make part of their family; but as there may happen to be persons who, from pecuniary embarrassments, are obliged to conceal themselves, I do not require such names to be placed on the outside of the door, provided their names are sent to me. And I hereby call upon all his Majesty’s subjects within the County of the City of Dublin immediately to comply with this regulation, as calculated for the public security; as those persons who shall willfully neglect a regulation so easy and salutary, as well as persons giving false statements of the inmates of their

houses, must, in the present crisis, abide the consequences of such neglect."

Parliament, being then in Session, met as usual, and Lord Castlereagh presented to the House of Commons a message from the Lord Lieutenant, that he thought it his indispensable duty, with the advice of the Privy Council, under the present circumstances of the kingdom, to issue a proclamation, which he had ordered to be laid before the House of Commons, to whom he remarked, the time for speaking was now gone by, and that period at last come when deeds and not words were to show the dispositions of Members of that House, and of every man who truly valued the Constitution of the land, or wished to maintain the laws, and protect the lives and properties of his Majesty's subjects. Everything which courage, honour, fortune could offer in the common cause was now called for. The rebels had openly thrown off the mask, &c., &c.

Open war having now been fairly commenced, the Government proceeded to the strongest measures of coercion. Although by no public official act were the picquetings, stranglings, floggings, and torturings, to extort confessions, justified or sanctioned, yet it is universally known, that under the very eye of Government, and with more than their tacit permission, were these outrages practiced. In mentioning the Irish Government, it is not meant that this system proceeded from its Chief Governor; it was boasted to have been extorted from him. And to this hour it is not only defended and justified, but panegyrised by the advocates and creatures of the furious drivers of that system of terrorism.

So far from there being any doubt of the existence of any such practices a short time previous to and during the rebellion, Sir Richard Musgrave has, in an additional appendix to his memoirs of the different rebellions in Ireland, given to the public his observations upon whipping and free quarters. He admits, indeed, that whosoever considers it abstractedly, must, of course, condemn it as obviously repugnant to the letter of the law, the benign principles of our Constitution, and those of justice and humanity; but he was convinced, that such persons as dispassionately considered the existing circumstances, and the pressure of the occasion under which it was adopted, would readily admit them to be, if not an excuse, at least an ample extenuation of that practice. "Suppose," says he, "the fullest information could have been obtained of the guilt of every individual, it would have been impracticable to arrest and commit the multitude. Some men of discernment and fortitude perceived that

some new expedient must be adopted to prevent the subversion of Government, and the destruction of society ; and whipping was resorted to.

“ As to the violation of the forms of the law by this practice, it should be recollected the law of nature, which suggested the necessity of it, supersedes all positive institutions, as it is imprinted on the heart of man for the preservation of his creatures, as it speaks strongly and instinctively, and as its end will be baffled by the slowness of deliberation.

“ When the sword of civil war is drawn, the laws are silent. As to the violation of humanity, it should be recollected, that nothing could exceed the cruelty of this banditti ; that their object was the extirpation of the loyalists ; that of the whippers, the preservation of the community at large.

“ This practice was never sanctioned by Government, as they, on the contrary, used their utmost exertions to prevent it ; and the evidence extorted from the person whipped never was used to convict any person, and was employed for no other reason but to discover concealed arms, and to defeat the deleterious schemes of the traitors. Free quarters were confined merely to the province of Leinster.

“ When Government was possessed of the evidence that the inhabitants of a village or a town, who had taken the usual oaths to lull and deceive the magistrates, were possessed of concealed arms, and meditated an insurrection and massacre, they sent amongst them a certain number of troops, whom they were obliged to maintain by contributions levied on themselves. This took place a few days before the rebellion broke out.

“ It has been universally allowed, that the military severities practiced in the County of Kildare occasioned a premature explosion of the plot, which the Directory intended to have deferred till the French effected a landing ; and one of them, Mr. Emmet, declared in his evidence, upon oath, before the Secret Committee of the Lords, that, but for the salutary effects of those military severities, there would have been a very general and formidable insurrection in every part of the country.”

This warm advocate for the torture has not with his usual minuteness favoured his reader with any instances of innocent persons having undergone this severe trial from wanton suspicion, personal revenge, or malevolent cruelty. Yet many such there were ; as must necessarily be the case, where the very cast of a countenance that displeased a corporal or common yeoman sufficed to subject the unfortunate passenger to this military ordeal. No man can give credit to the assertion, that *Government used*



*their utmost exertions to prevent it*, who knows anything of the state of Ireland at that disastrous period. In Beresford's Riding House, Sandy's Prevot, the Old Custom House, the Royal Exchange, some of the barracks, and other places in Dublin, there were daily, hourly notorious exhibitions of these torturings, as there also were in almost every town, village, or hamlet throughout the kingdom, in which troops were quartered.\*

Many attacks were made by the rebels on the second day of the rebellion (the 24th of May), generally with ill-success; the chief of which were those of Carlow, Hacketstown, and Monasterevan. There were also several skirmishes near Rathfarnham, Tallagh, Lucan, Luske, Dunboyne, Barretstown, Collon, and Baltinglass. At Dunboyne and Barretstown the insurgents are allowed to have had the advantage. But in all the other encounters, though greatly superior in numbers, they were defeated, with incredible loss of their men.

The non-arrival of the mail coach at the usual hour of eight o'clock in the morning at Carlow, was to be the signal for rising there and its vicinity. This town lies about forty miles southwest of Dublin. Of the intended attack the garrison was apprised by an intercepted letter, and from Lieutenant Roe, of the North Cork militia, who had observed the peasants assembling in the vicinity late in the evening of the 24th of May. The garrison consisted in the whole of about four hundred and fifty men, commanded by Colonel Mahon, of the Ninth Dragoons, and they were very judiciously posted for the reception of the assailants. A body, perhaps, amounting to a thousand or fifteen hundred, having assembled before the house of Sir Edward Crosbie, a mile and a half distant from Carlow, marched into the town at two o'clock in the morning on the 25th of May, in a very unguarded and tumultuary manner, shouting as they rushed into Tullow-street, with vain confidence, that the town was their own: they received so destructive a fire from the garrison, that they recoiled and endeavoured to retreat; but finding their flight intercepted, numbers took refuge in the houses, which were immediately fired by the soldiery. About eighty houses, with some hundred men, were consumed in this conflagration. As about half this column of assailants had arrived within the town, and few escaped from that situation, their loss can hardly be esti-

\* It is too large a credit to be allowed to this author's assertion, that *the evidence extorted from the person whipped never was used to convict any person*. If the security of the monarch be to be found in the affectionate hearts of his people, it is matter of important consideration how far these practices tended more to unite or separate the two kingdoms.

mated at less than four hundred ; while not a man was even wounded on the side of the King's troops.

After the defeat, executions commenced here, as they did elsewhere in this calamitous period, and about two hundred, in a short time, were hanged or shot, according to martial law. Among the earliest victims was Sir Edward Crosbie, before whose house the rebel column had assembled, but who certainly had not accompanied them in their march ; he was condemned and shot as an United Irishman. Sir Edward Crosbie had no further connection with the rebels than that they exercised on a lawn before the house, which of course Sir Edward could not prevent.

In the attack upon Slane, a mere handful of troops, about seventeen yeomen and forty of the Armagh militia, although surprised in the houses on which they were billeted, fought their way separately to their rallying post, and then made so vigorous a stand, that some hundreds of the people were with considerable slaughter repulsed. Several of the assailants of this small town appeared dressed in the uniforms of the Cork militia and Ancient Britons ; which appearance, in this and several other instances, proved a fatal deceit to the King's troops. They were the spoils taken at Prosperous ; at which place the success of the insurgents, amongst other causes, was owing to their having been headed or led on to the attack by an officer ; as their defeats in most other places, with immense superiority of numbers, were to be attributed to the want of some intelligent person to control and direct them. Their discomfitures in general were not the effect of fear or cowardice, but of want of discipline and organization.

Kildare County was not favourable to the insurgents, because it is generally a flat, grassy plain, where regular cavalry can act with terrible effect. Two weeks were sufficient to crush all insurrectionary movements in that county, and in Meath and Carlow. Yet in that short campaign splendid feats of gallantry were achieved by the half-armed peasantry. At Monasterevan, the insurgents were repulsed with some loss, the defenders of the place being in part "loyal" Catholics, commanded by one Cassidy. At Old Kilcullen the insurgents defeated and drove back the advance-guard of General Dundas, with the loss of twenty-two regular soldiers, including a Captain Erskine. But after the first few days, there was in reality no insurrection at all in Kildare County ; and the operations of the troops there, though called sometimes "battles," were nothing but onslaughts on disarmed fugitives—in other words, massacres. These proceedings were hailed with triumph in Dublin, as great military achievements. For example, the slaughter of the unresisting, capitulated people

at the Gibbet Rath of Kildare, was regarded as a vigorous measure which the emergencies of the time required. The rebels, according to Sir R. Musgrave, amounted to about 3,000 in number; they had entered into terms with General Dundas, and were assembled at a place that had been a Danish fort, called the Gibbet Rath. Having offered terms of submission to General Dundas on the 26th of May, that General despatched General Welford to receive their arms and grant them protection. Before the arrival of the latter, however, on the 3rd of June, the multitude of unresisting people were suddenly attacked by Sir James Duff, who, having galloped into the plain, disposed his army in order of battle, and with the assistance of Lord Roden's Fencible cavalry, fell upon the astonished multitude, as Sir Richard Musgrave states, "pell mell." Three hundred and fifty men, under terms of capitulation, admitted into the King's peace and promised his protection, were mowed down in cold blood, at a place known to every peasant in Kildare as "the Place of Slaughter," as well remembered as Mullaghmast itself, the Gibbet Rath of the Curragh of Kildare.

The massacre took place on the 3rd of June; the terms of surrender were made by one Perkins, a rebel leader, on the part of the insurgents, and General Dundas, on the part of the Government, and with its express sanction and permission for them, on delivering up their arms, to return to their homes. Their leader and his brother were to be likewise pardoned and set at liberty.

It was when the people were assembled at the appointed place, to comply with these conditions, that Sir James Duff, at the head of 600 men, then on his march from Limerick, proceeded to the place to procure the surrendered weapons. One of the insurgents, before giving up his musket, discharged it in the air, barrel upwards; this simple act was immediately construed into a hostile proceeding, and the troops fell on the astonished multitude, and the latter fled with the utmost precipitation, and were pursued and slaughtered without mercy by a party of fencible cavalry, called "Lord Jocelyn's Foxhunter's." According to the Rev. James Gordon, upwards of 200 fell on this occasion; Sir R. Musgrave states 350.

"No part of the infamy of this proceeding," says Dr. Madden, "attaches to General Dundas. The massacre took place without his knowledge or his sanction. His conduct throughout the rebellion was that of a humane and brave man."

The brutal massacre on the Curragh is thus described by Lord Camden, the Lord Lieutenant, in his despatch to the Duke of Portland:—



“DUBLIN CASTLE, May 29th.

“MY LORD,—I have only time to inform your Grace, that I learn from General Dundas that the rebels in the Curragh of Kildare have laid down their arms, and delivered up a number of their leaders.

“By a despatch I have this instant received, I have the further pleasure of acquainting your Grace that Sir James Duff, who, with infinite alacrity and address, has opened the communication with Limerick (that with Cork being already open), had arrived at Kildare whilst the rebels had possession of it, completely routed them and taken the place.

“I have the honour to be, &c.,

“CAMDEN.”

The same transaction is thus described by the chief actor :—

*Extract of a letter from Major-General Sir James Duff to Lieutenant-General Lake, dated Monasterevan.*

“I marched from Limerick on Sunday morning with sixty dragoons, Dublin Militia, three field-pieces, and two curriele guns, to open the communication with Dublin, which I judged of the utmost importance to Government. By means of cars for the infantry, I reached this place in forty-eight hours. I am now, at seven o'clock this morning (Tuesday), marching to surround the town of Kildare, the headquarters of the rebels, with seven pieces of artillery, 150 dragoons, and 350 infantry, determined to make a dreadful example of the rebels. I have left the whole country behind me perfectly quiet, and well protected by means of the troops and yeomanry corps.

“I hope to be able to forward this to you by the mail coach, which I will escort to Naas. I am sufficiently strong. You may depend on my prudence and success. My guns are well manned, and all the troops in high spirits. The cruelties the rebels have committed on some of the officers and men have exasperated them to a great degree. Of my future operations I will endeavour to inform you.

“P.S.—KILDARE, two o'clock, P.M.—We found the rebels retiring from the town on our arrival, armed ; we followed them with the dragoons. I sent on some of the yeomen to tell them, on laying down their arms, they should not be hurt. Unfortunately, some of them fired on the troops ;\* from that moment

\* Plowden describes the affair thus :—“As the troops advanced near the insurgents to receive their surrendered weapons, one of the latter, foolishly swearing that he would not deliver his gun otherwise than empty, discharged it with the muzzle upwards.”

they were attacked on all sides—nothing could stop the rage of the troops. I believe from two to three hundred of the rebels were killed. We have three men killed and several wounded. I am too much fatigued to enlarge.”

There is no need to recount in detail the various slaughters done by the troops, sometimes upon armed insurgents, sometimes upon mere masses of unarmed people. These were all commemorated indifferently by Lord Camden in his despatches as “battles,” “defeats of the rebels,” and the like. One of his despatches describes the most serious part of the rising in Wicklow County :—

“DUBLIN CASTLE, May 26th, 10 A.M.

“MY LORD,—I have detained a packet, in order to transmit to your Grace the information received this morning.

“I have stated in a private letter to your Grace, that a party of the rebels, to the amount of several hundreds, were attacked by a detachment of the Antrim militia, a small party of cavalry, and Captain Stratford’s yeomanry ; and that, being driven into the town of Baltinglass, they lost about 150 men.

“This morning an account has been received from Major Hardy, that yesterday a body of between 3,000 and 4,000 had collected near Dunlavin, when they were entirely defeated, with the loss of 300 men, by Lieutenant Gardner, at the head of a detachment of Antrim militia, and Captain Hardy’s and Captain Hume’s yeomanry.

“The troops and yeomanry behaved with the utmost gallantry in both actions.”

On the same 26th of May another slaughter took place on Tara Hill, in Meath. Some chiefs of the Leinster insurgents had assembled at that point, where they expected to be joined by a force coming from the North. They were here attacked, and after an obstinate defence, killing thirty-two of the soldiers and yeomanry, they were again overpowered, by discipline and superior arms. The issue is told in this despatch :—

*Extract of a letter from Captain Scobie, of the Reay Fencibles, to Lieutenant-General Lake, dated Dunshaughlin, Sunday morning, May 27th, 1798.*

“The division, consisting of five companies of his Majesty’s Reay Regiment of Fencible Infantry, which I have the honour to command, arrived here yesterday morning according to route, accompanied by Lord Fingal’s troop of yeomen cavalry, Captain Preston’s and Lower Kells’ troop of cavalry, and Captain Molloy’s company of yeomen infantry.

“At half-past three, P.M., I was informed that a considerable force of the rebel insurgents had taken station on Tara Hill. I instantly detached three companies of our division, with one field-piece, and the above corps of yeomanry, to the spot, under the command of Captain M’Lean, of the Reay’s, the issue of which has answered my most sanguine expectation.

“The rebels fled in all directions; 350 were found dead on the field this morning, among whom is their commander, in full uniform; many more were killed and wounded.

“Our loss is inconsiderable, being nine rank and file killed, sixteen rank and file wounded.”

On the whole, it must be admitted that the troops found but little difficulty in crushing the insurgent peasants of Kildare, Dublin, and Meath. The slaughter of the people was out of all proportion with the resistance. The number of deaths arising from torture or massacre, where no resistance was offered, during the year 1798, forms the far greater portion of the total number slain in this contest. The words of Mr. Gordon are:—“I have reason to think, more men than fell in battle were slain in cold blood. No quarter was given to persons taken prisoners as rebels, *with or without arms.*”\*

In the meantime, events still more serious were taking place in Wexford County.

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## CHAPTER XXXIV.

1798.

WEXFORD was one of the most peaceable counties in Ireland. Protestants and Catholics lived there in greater harmony than elsewhere; and had united in forming yeomanry corps for defence of the country after the attempted invasion under Hoche. The United Irish organization extended to that county as we know from Miles Byrne; but not with such power as in Meath and Kildare, for the very reason that the people were not, up to that time, subjected to such intolerable oppression. In the first months of 1798, however, everything was changed. Orders were given from the Castle to purify the yeomanry corps, by expelling those who should not take an oath that they were not United Irishmen. The oath was to the effect that they were neither United Irishmen nor *Orangemen*; but practically, the measure was so executed

\* Gordon’s History of the Rebellion.



as to disarm none but Catholics, or such Protestants as were known to be liberal in their opinions, like Antony Perry, of Inch. Miles Byrne (the personal memoir of this gallant officer was published only in 1863) gives several examples:—

“White, of Bally-Ellis, raised a foot corps, and got great praise from the Government, as he had it equipped and armed when Hoche’s expedition came to Bantry Bay in 1796.

“If this corps was one of the first that was ready to march, it was also one of the first to be disbanded and disarmed, for it was composed principally of Catholics, though the officers were Protestants.

“The corps of yeomanry cavalry, commanded by Beaumont, of Hyde Park, in which Antony Perry, of Inch, or Perry Mount, and Ford, of Ballyfad, were officers, refused to take any oath respecting their being Orangemen, or United Irishmen; at the same time they resolved not to resign, but to continue their service as usual. Soon after, the corps was ordered to assemble, when a regiment of militia was in waiting, and the suspected members were surrounded and disarmed; that is to say, all the Catholics, which were about one-half of the corps, with Perry and one or two other Protestants, being considered too liberal to make part of a corps that was henceforward to be upon the true Protestant, or Orange system.”

Edward Fitzgerald, of New Park, gives a sample of the proceedings which were carried on throughout the county from the moment of the formidable proclamation of martial law. He writes:—(*See Madden.*)

“Upon the 28th of April, 1798, my house, offices, and grounds, which are very considerable, were taken possession of by 120 cavalry and infantry, and 12 officers, who possessed themselves of all kinds of property within and without, and what they could not consume sent to Athy barracks. They continued in possession about thirty days, until the press of the times obliged them to change their position. Upon the approach of the military, my wife and family, of course, were obliged to fly my habitation, without the shortest previous intimation, and I was sent, under a military escort, to Dublin, where, after an arrest of ninety-one days, I was liberated, without the slightest specific charge of any kind. At the time of my arrest, I commanded as respectable a corps of cavalry as any in the kingdom, containing fifty-six in number, and not the slightest impropriety was ever attached to any of its members. From the time the military possessed themselves of my residence, the most iniquitous enormities were everywhere practiced upon the people of the country; their houses

plundered, their stock of all kinds seized, driven to the barracks, and sold by auction; their persons arrested, and sentenced to be flogged, at the arbitrary will of the most despicable wretches of the community. A man of the name of Thomas James Rawson, of the lowest order, the offal of a dunghill, had every person tortured and stripped, as his cannibal will directed. He would seat himself in a chair in the centre of a ring formed around the triangles, *the miserable victims kneeling under the triangle until they would be spotted over with the blood of the others.* People of the name of Cronin were thus treated. He made the father kneel under the son while flogging, the son under the father, &c."

Why such a demoniac system was introduced amongst a peaceful people—save to goad them into revolt—it is quite impossible to comprehend. Thousands of men who had avoided the United Irish Society before, now began to join it. The priests were still counselling patience and submission, and doing all in their power to make the people deliver up their pikes and other weapons. Miles Byrne says:—"The priests did everything in their power to stop the progress of the association of United Irishmen; particularly poor Father John Redmond, who refused to hear the confession of any of the United Irish, and turned them away from his knees. He was ill-requited afterwards for his great zeal and devotion to the enemies of his country; for after the insurrection was all over, Earl Mountnorris brought him in a prisoner to the British camp at Gorey, with a rope about his neck, hung him up to a tree, and fired a brace of bullets through his body. Lord Mountnorris availed himself of this opportunity to show his 'loyalty,' for he was rather suspected on account of not being at the head of his corps when the insurrection broke out in his neighbourhood. Both Redmond and the parish priest, Father Frank Cavanagh, were on the best terms with Earl Mountnorris, dining frequently with him at his seat, Camolin Park; which place Father Redmond prevented being plundered during the insurrection. This was the only part he had taken in the struggle."

Various kinds of torture were now habitually applied by the magistrates to extort confession of the two great crimes—having arms, or being United Irish; and the merest suspicion, or pretence of suspicion, was quite enough to cause a man to be half-hanged, flogged almost to death, or fitted with a pitch cap. Edward Hay gives a good general account of the methods by which the Wexford people were at last maddened to revolt:—

"The Orange system made no public appearance in the County of Wexford until the beginning of April, on the arrival there of the North Cork militia, commanded by Lord Kingsborough. In

this regiment there were a great number of Orangemen, who were zealous in making proselytes and displaying their devices—having medals and Orange ribbons triumphantly pendant from their bosoms. It is believed that previous to this period there were but few actual Orangemen in the county; but soon after, those whose principles inclined that way, finding themselves supported by the military, joined the association, and publicly avowed themselves by assuming the devices of the fraternity.

“It is said that the North Cork regiment were also the inventors (but they certainly were the introducers) of pitch-cap torture into the County of Wexford. Any person having his hair cut short (and, therefore, called a crotty, by which appellation the soldiery designated an United Irishman), on being pointed out by some loyal neighbour, was immediately seized and brought into a guard-house, where caps, either of coarse linen or strong brown paper, besmeared inside with pitch, were always kept ready for service. The unfortunate victim had one of these, well heated, compressed on his head, and when judged of a proper degree of coolness, so that it could not be easily pulled off, the sufferer was turned out amidst the horrid acclamations of the merciless torturers; and to the view of vast numbers of people, who generally crowded about the guard-house door, attracted by the cries of the tormented. Many of those persecuted in this manner, experienced additional anguish from the melted pitch trickling into their eyes. This afforded a rare addition of enjoyment to these keen sportsmen, who reiterated their horrid yells of exultation on the repetition of the several accidents to which their game was liable from being turned out; for, in the confusion and hurry of escaping from the ferocious hands of these more than savage barbarians, the blinded victims, frequently fell, or inadvertently dashed their heads against the walls in their way. The pain of disengaging this pitched cap from the head must be next to intolerable. The hair was often torn out by the roots, and not unfrequently parts of the skin were so scalded or blistered as to adhere and come off along with it. The terror and dismay that these outrages occasioned are inconceivable. A sergeant of the North Cork, nicknamed *Tom the Devil*, was most ingenious in devising new methods of torture. Moistened gunpowder was frequently rubbed into the hair cut close, and then set on fire. Some, while shearing for this purpose, had the tips of their ears snipped off. Sometimes an entire ear, and often both ears were completely cut off; and many lost part of their noses during the like preparation. But, strange to tell, these atrocities were publicly practiced without the least reserve, in



open day ; and no magistrate or officer ever interfered, but shamefully connived at this extraordinary mode of quieting the people ! Some of the miserable sufferers on these shocking occasions, or some of their relations or friends, actuated by a principle of retaliation, if not of revenge, cut short the hair of several persons, whom they either considered as enemies, or suspected of having pointed them out as objects for such desperate treatment.

“This was done with a view that those active citizens should fall in for a little experience of the like discipline, or to make the fashion of short hair so general that it might no longer be a mark of party distinction. Females were also exposed to the grossest insults from these military ruffians. Many women had their petticoats, handkerchiefs, caps, ribbons, and all parts of their dress that exhibited a shade of green (considered the national colour of Ireland), torn off, and their ears assailed by the most vile and indecent ribaldry. This was a circumstance so unforeseen, and, of course, so little provided against, that many women of enthusiastic loyalty suffered outrage in this manner.

“The proclamation of the County of Wexford having given greater scope to the ingenuity of magistrates to devise means of quelling all symptoms of rebellion, as well as of using every exertion to procure discoveries, they soon fell to the burning of houses wherein pikes, or other offensive weapons, were discovered, no matter how brought there ; but they did not stop here, for the dwellings of suspected persons, and those from which any of the inhabitants were found to be absent at night, were also consumed. The circumstance of absence from the houses very generally prevailed throughout the country, although there were the strictest orders forbidding it. This was occasioned at first, as was before observed, from apprehension of the Orangemen, but afterwards proceeded from the actual experience of torture by the people from the yeomen and magistrates. Some, too, abandoned their houses for fear of being whipped, if, on being apprehended, confession satisfactory to the magistrates could neither be given or extorted ; and this infliction many persons seemed to fear more than death itself. Many unfortunate men, who were taken in their houses, were strung up, as it were to be hanged, but were let down now and then to try if strangulation would oblige them to become informers. After these and the like experiments, several persons languished for some time, and at length perished in consequence of them. Smiths and carpenters, whose assistance was considered indispensable in the fabrication of pikes, were pointed out on evidence of their trades as the first and fittest objects of torture. But the sagacity of

some magistrates became at length so acute, from habit and exercise, that they *discerned* an United Irishman even at the first glance! And their zeal never suffered any person whom they designed to honour with such distinction, to pass off without convincing proof of their attention. . . . .

“Mr. Hunter Gowan had for many years distinguished himself by his activity in apprehending robbers, for which he was rewarded with a pension of £100 per annum. Now exalted to the rank of a magistrate, and promoted to be captain of a corps of yeomanry, he was zealous in his exertions to inspire the people about Gorey with dutiful submission to the magistracy, and a respectful awe of the yeomanry. On a public day in the week preceding the insurrection, the town of Gorey beheld the triumphal entry of Mr. Gowan, at the head of his corps, with his sword drawn and a human finger stuck on the point of it.

“With this trophy he marched into the town, parading up and down the streets several times, so that there was not a person in Gorey who did not witness this exhibition; while in the meantime the triumphant corps displayed all the devices of Orangemen. After the labour and fatigue of the day, Mr. Gowan and his men retired to a public house to refresh themselves, and, *like true blades of game*, their punch was stirred about with the finger that had *graced* their ovation, in imitation of keen fox hunters, who *whisk* a bowl of punch with the brush of a fox before their boozing commences. This captain and magistrate afterwards went to the house of Mr. Jones, where his daughters were, and while taking a snack that was set before him, he bragged of having blooded his corps that day, and that they were as staunch blood-hounds as any in the world. The daughters begged of their father to show them the croppy finger; which he deliberately took from his pocket and handed to them. Misses dandled it about with senseless exultation, at which a young lady in the room was so shocked that she turned about to a window, holding her hand to her face to avoid the horrid sight. Mr. Gowan, perceiving this, took the finger from his daughters, and *archly* dropped it into the disgusted lady's bosom. She instantly fainted, and thus the scene ended!!! . . . . .

“Having spent Friday, the 25th of May, with Mr. Turner, a magistrate of the county, at Newfort, he requested me to attend him next day at Newpark, the seat of Mr. Fitzgerald, where, as the most central place, he had appointed to meet the people of the neighbourhood. I accordingly met him there on Saturday, the 26th, where he continued the whole day administering the oath of allegiance to vast numbers of people. A certificate was

given to every person who took the oath and surrendered any offensive weapon. Many attended who offered to take the oath, and also to depose that they were not United Irishmen, and that they possessed no arms of any kind whatever, and earnestly asked for certificates. But so great was the concourse of these, that, considering the trouble of writing them out, it was found impossible to supply them all with such testimonials at that time. Mr. Turner, therefore, continued to receive surrendered arms, desiring such as had none to await a more convenient opportunity. Numbers, however, still conceiving that they would not be secure without a written protection, offered ten times their intrinsic value to such as had brought pike blades to surrender; but these being unwilling to forego the benefit of a written protection for the moment, refused to part with their weapons on any other condition. Among the great numbers assembled on this occasion were some men from the village of Ballaghkeen, who had the appearance of being more dead than alive, from the apprehensions they were under of having their houses burned, or themselves whipped should they return home. These apprehensions had been excited to this degree because that, on the night of Thursday, the 24th, the Enniscorthy cavalry, conducted by Mr. Archibald Hamilton Jacob, had come to Ballaghkeen; but, on hearing the approaching noise, the inhabitants ran out of their houses, and fled into large brakes of furze on a hill immediately above the village, from whence they could hear the cries of one of their neighbours, who was dragged out of his house, tied up a thorn tree, and while one yeoman continued flogging him, another was throwing water on his back. The groans of the unfortunate sufferer, from the stillness of the night, reverberated widely through the appalled neighbourhood; and the spot of execution these men represented to have appeared next morning 'as if a pig had been killed.' \*\*

On the 25th of May was perpetrated the massacre of Carnew. A large number of prisoners had been shut up in the gaol of that place, on suspicion of being guilty of possessing arms, or of knowing some one who possessed arms. These prisoners were all taken out of the gaol and deliberately shot in the ball alley, by the yeomen and a party of the Antrim militia, in *presence of their officers.* †

Father John Murphy was curate of Monageer and Boolevogue. He was a gentleman of learning and accomplishments, having studied in the University of Seville. He had now been resident

\* Edward Hay.

† Hay, Madden.



several years, quietly doing the sacred duties of his calling, enjoying the esteem of all his neighbours, and little dreaming that it was to fall to his lot to head an insurrection. Miles Byrne, who knew him well, narrates with much simplicity the story of the good priest's first act of war :—

“The Reverend John Murphy, of the parish of Monageer and Boolevogue, was a worthy, simple, pious man, and one of those Roman Catholic priests who used the greatest exertions and exhortations to oblige the people to surrender their pikes and fire-arms of every description. As soon as the cowardly yeomanry thought that all the arms were given up, and that there was no further risk, they took courage, and set out, on Whit Saturday, the 26th of May, 1798, burning and destroying all before them. Poor Father John, seeing his chapel and his house, and many others of the parish, all on fire, and in several of them the inhabitants consumed in the flames, and that no man seen in coloured clothes could escape the fury of the yeomanry, betook himself to the next wood, where he was soon surrounded by the unfortunate people who had escaped ; all came beseeching his reverence to tell them what was to become of them and their poor families. He answered them abruptly, that they had better die courageously in the field than be butchered in their houses : that, for his own part, if he had any brave men to join him, he was resolved to sell his life dearly, and prove to those cruel monsters that they should not continue their murders and devastations with impunity. All answered and cried out that they were determined to follow his advice, and to do whatever he ordered. ‘Well, then,’ he replied, ‘we must, when night comes, get armed the best way we can, with pitch-forks and other weapons, and attack the Camolin yeoman cavalry on their way back to Earl Mountnorris, where they will return to pass the night, after satisfying their savage rage on the defenceless country people.’

“Father John's plan was soon put in execution. He went to the high road by which the corps was to return, left a few men near a house, with instructions to place two cars across the road the moment the last of the cavalry had passed, and at a short distance from thence, half a quarter of a mile, he made a complete barricade across the highway, and then placed all those brave fellows who followed him behind a hedge along the roadside ; and in this position he waited to receive this famous yeomanry cavalry, returning from being glutted with all manner of crimes during this memorable day, the 26th of May, 1798.

“About nine o'clock at night, this corps, riding in great speed, encountered the above-mentioned obstacle on the road, and were

at the same moment attacked from front to rear by Father John and his brave men, with their pitch-forks. The cavalry, after discharging their pistols, got no time to reload them, or to make much use of their sabres. In short, they were literally lifted out of their saddles, and fell dead under their horses' feet. Lieutenant Booky, who had the command in the absence of Earl Mountnorris, was one of the first killed; he was a sanguinary villain, and it seemed a just judgment that befell them all. But be that as it may, Father John and his men were much elated with their victory, and getting arms, ammunition, and horses by it, considered themselves formidable, and able at least to beat the cruel yeomanry in every encounter. They marched at once to Camolin Park, the residence of Lord Mountnorris, where they got a great quantity of arms of every description, and which had been taken from the country people for months before; and even the carabines belonging to the corps, and which had not been distributed, waiting the arrival of the Earl from Dublin.

"During the night, and the next day, Whit Sunday, the 27th of May, the people flocked in to join Father John's standard, on hearing of his success; and as soon as the news was known in Gorey, the troops took fright and abandoned the town, letting the prisoners go where they pleased; but finding that Father John had marched in another direction, they returned and resumed their persecutions as before; they again arrested great numbers, and had them placed in the market-house loft, ready to be butchered the moment the insurgents made their appearance before the town. Poor Perry was amongst the prisoners, and in a dreadful state, having the skin as well as the hair burned off his head. Esmond Cane was arrested that day and made a prisoner."

Father John might now have marched into Wicklow County without much opposition, "but," continues Miles Byrne, "he thought it would be more advisable to raise the whole County of Wexford first, and get possession of the principal towns. In consequence of this decision, on Whit Sunday, the 27th of May, he marched with all his forces, then amounting to 4,000 or 5,000 men, to Oulart Hill, a distance of ten miles from Wexford, and five from Enniscorthy. He encamped on this hill for the purpose of giving an opportunity to the unfortunate people who were hiding to come and join him. He soon perceived several corps of yeomanry cavalry in sight, but all keeping at a certain distance from the hill, waiting until the infantry from Wexford arrived to make the first attack.

"Shortly after, he saw a large force on the march, flanked by some cavalry, and as soon as they began to mount the hill, Father

John assembled his men and showed them the different corps of cavalry that were waiting, he said, 'to see us dispersed by the foot troops, to fall on us and to cut us in pieces ; but let us remain firm together and we shall surely defeat the infantry, and then we shall have nothing to dread from the cavalry, as they are too great cowards to venture into the action.' All promised to conform to his instructions. 'Well, then,' he rejoined, 'we must march against the troops that are mounting the hill, and when they are deployed and ready to begin the attack, we must retreat precipitately back to where we are, and then throw ourselves down behind this old ditch,' pointing to a boundary on the top of the hill. All his instructions were executed as he had ordered.

"The King's troops were commanded by Colonel Foote and Major Lombard, and as soon as they came within about two musket-shots of the insurgents, they deployed and prepared for action, but became enraged when they saw the insurgents retreating back to the top of the hill ; however, they followed quickly, knowing that the hill was completely surrounded by the several corps of yeomanry cavalry, and that it was impossible for the insurgents to escape before they came in with them.

"Father John allowed the infantry to come within half musket-shot of the ditch, and then a few men on each flank and in the centre stood up, at the sight of which the whole line of infantry fired a volley. Instantly, Father John and all his men sallied out and attacked the soldiers, who were in the act of re-charging their arms ; and although they made the best fight they could with their muskets and bayonets, they were soon overpowered and completely defeated by the pikemen, or rather by the men with pitch-forks and other weapons ; for very few had pikes at this battle, on account of having given them up by the exhortations and advice of the priests.

"Of this formidable expedition, which was sent from Wexford on the 27th of May to exterminate the insurgents, very few returned to bring the woeful tidings of their defeat, and the glorious victory obtained by the people over their cruel tyrants. Of the North Cork party, that had been the scourge of the country for several months previous, and so distinguished for making Orangemen, hanging, picketing, putting on pitch-caps, &c., Major Lombard, the Honourable Captain De Courcy, Lieutenants Williams, Ware, Barry, and Ensign Keogh, with all the privates but two, were left dead on the field of battle. In short, none escaped except Colonel Foote, a sergeant, a drummer, and the two privates mentioned above. The insurgents had but three killed and five or six wounded. The Shilmalier cavalry,



commanded by Colonel Lehunt, as well as the different corps of cavalry that surrounded the hill during the battle, and which did not take any part in the action, in their precipitated retreat to Wexford, Enniscorthy, and Gorey, shot every man they met on the road ; went to the houses, called the people to their doors and put them to death ; many who were asleep shared the same fate, their houses being mostly burned.

“Solomon Richards, commander of the Enniscorthy cavalry, and Hawtry White, who commanded all the troops of cavalry sent from Gorey to exterminate the people, surpassed description. They little thought, however, that for every one they put to death in cold blood, they were sending thousands to join the insurgent camp.

“Father John and his little army now became quite flushed with their last victory. Seeing the King's troops flying and escaping in every direction, they were at a loss to know which division they should pursue ; they, however (having as yet no cavalry), marched from Oulart Hill and encamped for the night on Carrigrew Hill. Next morning, the 28th of May, at seven o'clock, they marched to Camolin, and from thence to Ferns. Not meeting with any of the King's troops in this town to oppose them, and having learned that they had retreated to Gorey and to Enniscorthy, Father John resolved at once to attack this last town, in order to afford a better opportunity to the brave and unfortunate country people to escape from their hiding places and come to join his standard, he and his little army crossed the Slaney by the bridge at Scarawalsh ; and certainly this skillful manœuvre or countermarch had the happiest result ; for immediately on crossing the river, he was joined by crowds.”

On their arrival before Enniscorthy, the insurgents amounted to the number of 7,000 men, 800 of whom were armed with guns, which they had seized at Camolin almost immediately after they had been sent to that place by the Earl of Mountnorris. About one o'clock on the 28th of May, Enniscorthy was attacked by this vast multitude, and after a vigorous defence by the comparatively small garrison, was left in possession of the insurgents. The garrison retreated and fell back on Wexford ; they lost above ninety of their men, and the town was on fire in several places. They were attended by a confused number of unfortunate loyal inhabitants, but were not pursued by the insurgents, who might have easily cut off their retreat.

To disperse the insurgents, if possible, without battle or concession, or perhaps to divert their attention and retard their progress, an expedient was essayed by Captain Boyd, of the

Wexford cavalry. This officer had, in consequence of a requisition to that purpose of the sheriff and other gentlemen, on the 25th and 27th, from information or suspicion of treasonable designs, arrested Beauchamp Bagenal Harvey, of Bargy Castle, John Henry Colclough, of Ballyteigue, and Edward Fitzgerald, of New Park, all three respectable gentlemen of the County of Wexford. Visiting them in prison on the 29th, Captain Boyd agreed with these gentlemen, that one of them should go to the rebels at Enniscorthy, and endeavour to persuade them to disperse and return to their homes; but would not give authority to promise any terms to the insurgents in case of submission. Colclough, at the request of Mr. Harvey, agreed to go, on condition of his being accompanied by Mr. Fitzgerald. On the arrival of these two gentlemen at Enniscorthy, about four in the afternoon of the same day, they found the insurgents in a state of confusion, distracted in their councils, and undetermined in any plan of operation; some proposing to attack Newtownbarry, others Ross, others Wexford, others to remain in their present posts; the greater number to march home for the defence of their houses against Orangemen.

It was but the resolution of a moment to march in a body to attack Wexford. Mr. Fitzgerald they detained in the camp, and Mr. Colclough they sent back to announce their hostile intentions.

Mr. Colclough arrived in Wexford early in the evening, and waited in the Bull Ring (a small square in the town so denominated) until the officers and other gentlemen in the place had there assembled, when he informed them, in a very audible voice, from on horseback, that having gone out, according to their directions, to the insurgents on Vinegar Hill, he found, as he had already suggested before his departure, that he possessed no influence with the people, who had ordered him to return and announce their determination of marching to the attack of Wexford; adding that they had detained Mr. Fitzgerald. Mr. Colclough then requested to be informed, if it were intended to make further trial of his services, or to require his longer attendance, as otherwise they must be sensible how eager he must be to relieve the anxiety of his family by his presence. He was then entreated to endeavour to maintain tranquillity in his own neighbourhood, which having promised to do, as much as in his power, he called at the jail to visit Mr. Harvey, with whom he agreed (according to the compact with Captain Boyd) to return next day and take his place in the jail, and then set off through the barony of Forth, for his own dwelling at Ballyteigue, distant about ten miles from Wexford.

Early in the morning of the 29th, Colonel Maxwell, of the Donegal militia, with 200 men of his regiment and a six-pounder, arrived in Wexford from Duncannon Fort, despatched by General Fawcett, who had been apprised of the insurrection on the 27th, by Captain Knox, an officer sent to escort Sergeant Stanley, a judge of assize, on his way to Munster. This reinforcement being insufficient, an express was sent from the Mayor of Wexford to the General, requesting an additional force; he expeditiously returned with an exhilarating answer, that the General himself would commence his march for Wexford on the same evening, from Duncannon, with the Thirteenth Regiment, four companies of the Meath militia, and a party of artillery with two howitzers. On the receipt of this intelligence, Colonel Maxwell, leaving the five passes into the town guarded by the yeomen and North Cork militia, took post with his men on the Windmill Hill, above the town, at day-break on the following morning, the 30th, with the resolution to march against the enemy on the arrival of General Fawcett's army.

That General had marched according to his promise, on the evening of the 29th; but halting at Taghmon, seven miles from Wexford, he had sent forward a detachment of eighty-eight men, including eighteen of the artillery, with the howitzers, under the command of Captain Adams, of the Meath militia. This detachment was intercepted early in the morning of the 30th, by the insurgents, under the Three Rocks, which they had occupied as a military station, being about three miles from Wexford; the howitzers were taken and almost the whole party slain.\*

Colonel Maxwell, informed of the destruction of Captain Adams' detachment, by two officers who had escaped the slaughter, advanced immediately with what forces he could collect, with design to retake the howitzers, and co-operate with General Fawcett, of whose retreat he had no suspicion, but observing his left flank exposed by the retreat of some of the Taghmon cavalry, and the enemy making a motion to surround him, he retired to Wexford, with the loss of Lieutenant-Colonel Watson killed, and two privates wounded.

Everything now wore the aspect of a gloomy, desperate con-

\* The following official account was given of this affair:—

“DUBLIN CASTLE, June 2nd, 1798.

“Accounts have been received from Major General Eustace, at New Ross, stating that Major General Fawcett having marched with a company of the Meath regiment from Duncannon Fort, this small force was surrounded by a very large body between Taghmon and Wexford, and defeated. General Fawcett effected his retreat to Duncannon Fort.”



sternation. Some yeomen and supplementaries, posted nearly opposite the gaol, were heard continually to threaten to put all the prisoners to death, which so roused the attention of the gaoler to protect his charge, that he barricaded the door, and delivered up the key to Mr. Harvey. Some magistrates were admitted to see Mr. Harvey in the gaol, and, at their most urgent entreaties, he wrote the following notice to the insurgents:—

“I have been treated in prison with all possible humanity, and am now at liberty. I have procured the liberty of all the prisoners. If you pretend to Christian charity, do not commit massacre, or burn the property of the inhabitants, and spare your prisoners’ lives.

“B. B. HARVEY.

“*Wednesday, May 30th, 1798.*”

Counsellor Richards, with his brother, then undertook to announce the surrender of the town to the insurgents, whose camp they reached in safety, though clad in full uniform. Scarcely had these deputies set out upon their mission, when all the military corps, a part of the Wexford infantry under Captain Hughes only excepted, made the best of their way out of town in whatever direction they imagined they could find safety, without acquainting their neighbours on duty of their intentions. The principal inhabitants, whose services had been accepted of for the defence of the town, were mostly Catholics, and, according to the prevalent system, were subject to the greatest insults and taunts. They were always placed in front of the posts, and cautioned to behave well, or that death should be the consequence. Accordingly, persons were placed behind to keep them to their duty, and these were so watchful of their charge, that they would not even permit them to turn about their heads. Thus were the armed inhabitants left at their post, abandoned by their officers, and actually ignorant of the flight of the soldiery, until all possible means of retreating were cut off. Upon the approach of the insurgents, the confusion and dismay were excessive, the few remaining officers and privates ran confusedly through the town, threw off their uniforms, and hid themselves wherever their fears suggested. Some ran for boats to convey them off, and threw their arms and ammunition into the water. Some, from an insufficiency of men’s clothes, assumed female attire for the purpose of disguise. Extreme confusion, tumult, and panic were everywhere exhibited. The North Cork regiment, on quitting the barracks, had set them on fire, but the fire was soon after put out.

In the meantime, Mr. Richards having arrived at the Three Rocks, made it known to the insurgent chiefs, that they were

deputed to inform the people that the town would be surrendered to them, on condition of sparing lives and properties; these terms, they were informed, would not be complied with, unless the arms and ammunition of the garrison were also surrendered. Mr. Loftus Richards was, therefore, detained as a hostage, and Counsellor Richards and Mr. Fitzgerald were sent back to the town, to settle and arrange the articles of capitulation. These gentlemen, on their arrival, to their astonishment, found the place abandoned by the military. A multitude of insurgents was just ready to pour in and take unconditional possession of the town. It was therefore thought necessary to treat with them, in order to prevent the consequences apprehended from such a tumultuary influx of people. Dr. Jacob, then Mayor of the town and Captain of the Wexford infantry, entreated Mr. Fitzgerald to announce to the people rushing in, that the town was actually surrendered; and to use every argument that his prudence might suggest to make their entry as peaceable as possible. Mr. Fitzgerald complied, and instantly after this communication, thousands of people poured into the town, over the wooden bridge, shouting and exhibiting all the marks of extravagant and victorious exultation. They first proceeded to the gaol, released all the prisoners, and insisted that Mr. Harvey should become their commander. All the houses in town, not abandoned by the inhabitants now became decorated with green boughs, and other emblematic symbols. The doors were universally thrown open, and the most liberal offers made of spirits and drink, which, however, were not as freely accepted, until the persons offering them had first drank themselves, as a proof that the liquor was not poisoned—a report having prevailed to that effect.

The insurgents being in possession of the town, several of the yeomen, having thrown off their uniforms, affected, with all the signs and emblems of the United Irishmen, to convince them of their unfeigned cordiality and friendship; those who did not throw open their doors with offers of refreshment and accommodation to the insurgents, suffered by plunder, their substance being considered as enemy's property. The house of Captain Boyd was a singular exception. It was, though not deserted, pillaged.

Those troops who had fled from Wexford signalized themselves in their retreat by plundering and devastating the country; by burning the cabins and shooting the peasants in their progress; and thus they augmented the number and rage of the insurgents. These excesses were seen from the insurgents' station at the Three Rocks, and it was with extreme difficulty that the enraged multitude were hindered by their chiefs from rushing down upon

Wexford, and taking summary vengeance of the town and its inhabitants.

The whole County of Wexford was now in open insurrection. Perhaps, it would be more correct to say that the people had taken to the field because their houses were mostly burned down, and had collected themselves into masses, with such poor arms as they had for their common protection. The aggregate numbers of persons, whether insurgents or fugitives, with their crowds of women and children, far exceeded the numbers of fighting men that the county could furnish. The population of Wexford at that time did not much, if at all, exceed one hundred and fifty thousand persons.\* The men who were properly of fighting age, therefore, were not more than thirty thousand. Sir Jonah Barrington has estimated the whole number of those who rose in this county at thirty-five thousand; but even to attain this amount there must have been counted many thousands of old men, women, and children, besides many thousands more who were unarmed, or only half-armed. These straggling multitudes, then, without camp equipage, or accoutrements, or artillery (except a few ship-guns, not mounted, and some captured field-pieces), were now committed to a desperate struggle against the force of a powerful empire, well supplied with everything, and led by veteran generals. The only wonder, to those who read this narration, will be, not that they were finally overpowered, but that they achieved such successes, as for a time they certainly did. If the other thirty-one counties had done as well as Wexford, there would have been that year an end to British dominion.

\* In 1841, it was 202,033. In 1851, it was 180,159.—*Thom's Almanac.*



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